

“STAND YE IN HOLY PLACES”: PLACE AND IDENTITY
IN CONTEMPORARY MORMON MEETINGHOUSES

by

Ruedigar Paul Matthes

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of Utah
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

in

Environmental Humanities

College of Humanities

The University of Utah

August 2016

Copyright © Ruedigar Paul Matthes 2016

All Rights Reserved

The University of Utah Graduate School

STATEMENT OF THESIS APPROVAL

The thesis of **Ruedigar Paul Matthes**

has been approved by the following supervisory committee members:

Danielle Endres	, Chair	May 18, 2016
		Date Approved
Robert S. Tatum	, Member	May 18, 2016
		Date Approved
Thomas Carter	, Member	May 18, 2016
		Date Approved

and by **Jeffrey McCarthy**, Chair/Dean of

the Department/College/School of **Environmental Humanities**

and by David B. Kieda, Dean of The Graduate School.

ABSTRACT

Latter-Day Saint ward meetinghouses have been designed to emphasize certain spatial mythologies of the Church in order to encourage a distinct(ly Mormon) sense of place. The meanings interpreted in these places inform member relationships both within Mormon culture and across societal cultures. Furthermore, these texts inadvertently tell the global story of “circulation, consumption and communication” which are key features of what anthropologist Marc Augé calls “non-places” (vii). This thesis explores the tensions that exist in the stories told through contemporary meetinghouses and which inform Mormon religious and cultural practices. In order to explore these tensions, I engage in close readings of significant Mormon religious texts and the Mormon built environment. I also draw from ethnographic fieldwork performed at an LDS meetinghouse in Utah. Through this mixed-methods approach, I hope to explore the role of LDS architectural practices on the cultural identities and understandings of active LDS practitioners.

For Angela.

Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold, it cometh quickly, saith the Lord. Amen.

-Doctrine and Covenants 87.8

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ix
CHAPTERS	
1. ENTERING THE HOUSE OF GOD: AN INTRODUCTION.....	1
Entering the Places of Mormonism.....	1
Entering a Place: A Theoretical Framework for Investigating Mormon Place.....	5
Entering the Conversation: A Review of Literature	9
Entering the Ward: Research Methods for Exploring Mormon Place.....	13
Entering the Ward Meetinghouse: Moving Forward	16
Notes	18
2. “IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF THE WORLD”: PLACE-ING AND THE CREATION OF MORMON NON-PLACE.....	20
Introduction.....	20
“The Same Yesterday, Today, and Forever”: A History of Mormon Non-Place.....	26
“A Resting Place for the Weary Traveler”: Familiarity, Travelers, and Non-Place....	37
“Our Appearance Identifies Us”: Place-ing Mormon Non-Places	50
Conclusion	56
Notes	58
3. “COME OUT OF THE WORLD INTO THE CHURCH”: SPATIAL MYTHOLOGIES, SENSE OF PLACE, AND MORMON IDENTITY IN WARD MEETINGHOUSES.....	62
Introduction.....	62
Mormon Spatial Mythologies and Identity	66
Fortifying the City: Appropriateness, Standards, and Implications.....	75
Staying by the Tree: Centrality, Sense of Place, and Identity	85
Conclusion	89
Notes	92

4. “IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF THE WORLD” REVISITED: TENSION, PECULIARITY, AND THE DESIRE TO FIT IN	95
Introduction.....	95
Historical Tensions	98
Material Manifestations	100
Tension in Practice.....	106
Conclusion	128
Notes	129
5. LIGHT, SHADOWS, AND TRANSGRESSION: AN IN(CON)CLUSION.....	133
Light and Shadow	133
Transgression	139
Multiplicity	141
Inconclusion.....	142
Notes	144
WORKS CITED	146

LIST OF FIGURES

1	Missionary Plaque	34
2	Wasatch Building	40
3	Heritage 09T Floor Plan	44
4	<i>Chaos & Calm</i> , Justin Wheatley	83

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to the help, support, and guidance I have received from my chair, Danielle Endres, whose feedback and mentorship has been invaluable. I also acknowledge the support that Terry Tempest and Brooke Williams have offered me as I have explored difficult topics regarding my own faith and what it means to create change. Brett Clark offered a place to explore the ideas for this thesis in their infancy. And I certainly could not have done this without the generous support of Jeff McCarthy, who encouraged and guided me when I needed it.

And while my mentors have been crucial, I could not have done this work without a cohort of dear friends that have made this exploration memorable. Carissa, Carl, Claire, Jack, Jen, Nicole, and Sarah pushed me places I could not have gone otherwise. I love and admire them.

I would also like to thank the members of the ward that I observed. They not only allowed me to attend with them, but truly welcomed me into their fold. Without them, this work would have been flat and incomplete.

And lastly, I want to thank William Attwood-Charles. Without our conversations on the streets of Boston, this thesis would never have happened.

Thank you.

CHAPTER 1

ENTERING THE HOUSE OF GOD: AN INTRODUCTION

Entering the Places of Mormonism

Mythologies are systems of beliefs and (hi)stories that inform practice in place and empower individuals and communities to (re)create relationships, understandings, and the(ir) world. For members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), Mormons, these mythologies rely heavily on spatial symbolism. This spatial symbolism is used to create a distinction between righteousness and wickedness and is often presented as dichotomous pairings of geographically distinct locations: Zion/Babylon or Nephite land/Lamanite land, for example. Mormon spatial mythologies manifest in the contemporary practices of LDS Church members and the LDS Church administration. This is especially clear in the practice of ward meetinghouse design and construction. The ward meetinghouse is a building used for local, weekly worship services in which congregations of members (wards) meet together to participate in the ordinance of the sacrament and to worship and learn together. These buildings hold special significance in Mormon worship because they are viewed as “House[s] of God” (“Steeple” 40) and are “dedicated to the Lord as sacred space[s]” (Christofferson n.p.). In other words, they are places set aside from the secular world wherein individuals may come to better know God through ritual practices and congregational interactions.

Because ward buildings are sacred places, places to better know God, and places

to unite with other individuals, they are places of great importance in Mormon belief. The importance of these buildings is also evinced by the fact that members are encouraged to attend three-hour worship services held in these buildings each Sunday. While three hours each week does not seem like much, “the places where we spend our time affect the people we are and can become” (Hiss xi), especially when those places are wedded to symbolisms and mythologies that inform practices. This is because places are socially constructed and both inform and are informed by user practices. Following from this concept of place, ward meetinghouses influence the people that worship in them. This influence is, perhaps, more acute because these places hold special significance in Mormon culture due to their sacredness. Their significance is further enhanced by the spatial symbolism with which Mormons describe their mythologies. This symbolism tends toward a dualistic spatiality (e.g., Zion/Babylon), which is enacted through the practice of mythology. In the performance of this mythology, Mormons create refuges of righteousness (Zion) amidst the secular wickedness of Babylon in their ward meetinghouses. As historian Douglas Alder describes, the ward building is “where saints [Mormon practitioners] gather for reinforcement in their combat against secularism” (65).

In viewing ward buildings as sites of Zion (a place of righteousness) amid a sea of Babylon (a place of wickedness), I seek to understand how these buildings, these sacred places, act upon the people who use them and how individual and congregational practices rearrange the meanings of these places. More specifically, I seek to expand theory to aid in understanding place-creation, especially in regards to sites interpreted by users as sacred. In order to answer these questions, however, it is essential to first explore the constructed meanings within these buildings and how those constructs encourage

distinct(ly) Mormon behaviors in place. In this project I refer to the constructed meanings of ward buildings as “official” or “encouraged” meanings since these meetinghouses engender specific and intended sense of place. This specific sense of place is ascribed to ward buildings through *place*-ing strategies employed by Church officials and administrators.

These official meanings are not the only meanings present, however, and it is the adoption of both official and unofficial practices and meanings that expose a series of interconnected tensions found in the contemporary architectural, cultural, and theological practices of the LDS Church. Furthermore, while individual practices reflect back on meanings in place, the architectural and design elements of the buildings provide insight into theological and mythological principles surrounding individual and group identity.

Exploring both practices and meanings, I grapple with four distinct, yet interlaced, tensions that exist within those meanings. The tensions I bring to light and which are woven throughout this thesis and are ever-present in ward buildings, are: 1) the coexistence of the administrative strategy of *place*-ing and the member tactic of placemaking in the creation of meetinghouse sense of place, 2) the simultaneity of sacred place and non-place within ward buildings, 3) sacred, spatial mythologies and their relation to embodied and emplaced practices, and 4) the boundary between Zion and Babylon, righteousness and wickedness. Within this web of tensions, local congregations and members exist and practice their faith. In navigating these tensions, members work to create sites that are individually meaningful and create place from non-place, using both official and unofficial means to do so. While navigating these tensions, however, members interact with ward meetinghouses that serve to both enhance and erase

particular elements of individual and group identity and act as tools of cultural hegemony that enforce ideas of appropriateness.

Despite the controlling influence these buildings exert upon members, however, members are always capable of transgressing the official sense(s) of place of these buildings, though such transgressions are not necessarily common and may contribute to other forms of control within the buildings. Thus, I examine both how ward buildings inform the members who use them regarding appropriate cultural norms and how members' responses to official meanings allows for new understanding of the place of the ward building, including the creation of alternative places and meanings within the building. In order to do so, I interrogate moments of perceived tension between belief sets as well as between belief and practice through close readings of significant texts, architectural drawings, and the Wasatch building in Utah.¹ Furthermore, I draw from fieldnotes taken during my time observing the Wasatch Front ward, which meets in the Wasatch building, and information gathered through email interviews in order to highlight themes and patterns of practice.

I wish to also suggest that the spatial mythologies of the LDS church are, of themselves, environments. I opened this introduction by stating that mythologies are systems of beliefs and (hi)stories that inform practice in place and empower individuals and communities to (re)create relationships, understandings, and the(ir) world. I could also have said that mythologies are environments made up of beliefs and (hi)stories. These mythologies, while active participants in identity creation, are much like physical environments and require navigation. These mythologies, then, are ecosystems and landscapes—not landscapes in the art history sense, but landscapes to be interacted with.

These mythological environments, I suggest, play an active role in an individual's understanding of the world.

This is further compounded by the argument that in the contemporary moment, the human environment is increasingly becoming an environment of non-places. This is problematic because, as Henri Lefebvre has argued, space (or place) is at once “a *product* to be used, to be consumed” and “a *means of production*” (85, emphasis original). In light of the recent proliferation of non-places, Lefebvre's words pose questions about what these non-places are producing. In a world of strip malls, expressways, and chain restaurants—in a world of non-places—it becomes essential to understand how meanings can still be and are created in place. By focusing on the built environment of the LDS Church, I explore the placemaking that occurs in non-place, and I do so through exploring where humans are situated in the space between non-place and mythologies.

Entering a Place: A Theoretical Framework for Investigating Mormon Place

Space and Place

In order to explore the role that LDS meetinghouses have on the formation of identity and culture within the Mormon Church, I follow Henri Lefebvre's and Michel de Certeau's arguments that space (and place) is socially constructed and capable of social (re)construction. I combine these social-constructionist arguments with the argument that places (as opposed to spaces) are sites of meaning (Tuan, Relph, Casey, Stegner). I trouble this notion, however, by borrowing Marc Augé's concept of non-places (viii) in order to more fully explore the role that ward meetinghouses have in the lives of practicing Latter-day Saints. In order to explore the meanings (and nonmeanings) of LDS

ward buildings, I employ sense of place, especially following Gillian Rose's argument that sense of place can foster an us/them, insider/outsider, mentality (99), which Edward Relph calls a "poisoned sense of place" (222). In addition to Rose's troubling of sense of place, I explore Timothy Creswell's definition of place as "neither totally material nor completely mental," especially his suggestion that "[A church] is neither just a particular material artifact, nor just a set of religious ideas; it is always both" (*In Place* 13) in order to explore how ward buildings function as places.

I follow Creswell further in arguing that "place reproduces the beliefs that produce it in a way that makes them appear natural, self-evident, and commonsense" (16) through their "active participa[tion] in our understanding of what is good, just, and appropriate" (16). Using this line of thought, I suggest that the LDS Church utilizes meanings in place in order encourage approved and appropriate practices and behaviors in its members, which practices are seen as natural and common-sense.

I term this *place*-ing, which I explore fully in Chapter 2. *Place*-ing is a means of dictating sense of place through the governance of practices in place. And while *place*-ing is a top-down strategy employed by the LDS Church in order to maintain control over its buildings (and, by extension, the people who worship in those buildings), it is not the only method of creating meaning within ward buildings. Rather, I show that members use the practice of placemaking as defined by Lynda Schneekloth and Robert Shibley in their book *Placemaking: The Art and Practice of Building Communities* to generate meaning in place. For Schneekloth and Shibley, "[p]lacemaking is the way all of us human beings transform the places in which we find ourselves into places in which we live" (1) by "stress[ing] the importance of creating a dialogue wherein groups of people can affirm,

interrogate, and construct the knowledge they need to make and maintain their own place” (6). This dialogic engagement in place stresses the importance of community and multiple knowledges and is a bottom-up practice of creating place.²

Such placemaking practices can be both in line with officially sanctioned meanings and transgressive of those meanings. In exploring such placemaking practices, I borrow from de Certeau whose definition of tactics (xix, 30), when paired with his and Lefebvre’s ideas of socially constructed space, offer LDS practitioners the power to (re)create their places of worship to more closely meet their needs. Such tactics, while possibly reinforcing official meanings, can also be transgressive and do not “rest on the intentions of actors but on *results*” (*In Place* 23, emphasis original)

It is integral to keep in mind that transgressive placemaking happens in response to what I have earlier referred to as the strategy of *place-ing*. Both placemaking and *place-ing* are practices of designating meanings to a place. Henri Lefebvre sees the creation and/or ascription of meaning as important and discusses such meaning-filled sites as spaces. He argues that “[s]pace considered in isolation is an empty abstraction” (12) and, therefore, that it ought to be discussed in its relation to society and culture. Space, for Lefebvre, is where social practices occur (14). Michel de Certeau accompanies Lefebvre in the idea of space as necessarily social, but adds that place is an instant or a freeze-frame in time (a word before it is spoken)—which coincides with Yi-Fu Tuan’s argument that “place [is] a pause” (179)—while “space is a practiced place” (de Certeau 117). For both Lefebvre and de Certeau social practices are at once formed by and capable of forming space.

While Lefebvre and de Certeau tend to consider space as meaningful, many other

theorists and writers, and especially those within the environmental humanities, refer to such meaning-filled sites as places (Berry, Casey, Cresswell, Relph, Seamon, Stegner, Tuan, etc.). Because of the primacy given to place in environmental humanities literature, I, too, use the term place when referring to sites of meaning; however, my definition is also informed by the definitions granted to space by Lefebvre and de Certeau, suggesting that it is social practices that create and ascribe meaning to location and that these meanings are not flat or uniform, but heterogeneous.

Acknowledging the meaning(s) that exist in a place is referred to as a sense of place. This sense of place is vital, for authors like Wendell Berry and Wallace Stegner, in understanding the self. Sense of place has been used, in tandem with the concept of place as meaningful, to advocate for preservation. This is evidenced in works like Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*, Edward Abbey's *Desert Solitaire*, and Terry Tempest Williams' *Red* among others. In works such as these, the authors explicate and argue for their own sense(s) of place in hopes of preserving the places that serve as their subjects. While this mode of thought is popular in preservationist/conservationist discourse, Gillian Rose argues that sense of place can also lead to exclusionary practices, which may lead to injustices (99). While I find sense of place a useful concept in preservationist discourse, I, along with Rose, acknowledge its limits and, therefore, argue for a more inclusive conception of place. I acknowledge the tensions extant in the phrase sense of place, and I explore how these tensions are manifest within both official and unofficial senses of place within ward buildings.

Entering the Conversation: A Review of Literature

For Mormon practitioners, ward meetinghouses are seen as “House[s] of God” (“Steeple” 40) and are “dedicated to the Lord as sacred space[s]” (Christofferson n.p.). The sacredness of the meetinghouse is evidenced by the practice of religious rituals such as the offering of prayers, the singing of hymns, and the administration of the sacrament ordinance (Hartley n.p.). Because of the meaning that is created through social interaction, these meetinghouses are embodiments of Mormon faith (Starrs 324), which are invested with Mormon beliefs (ibid. 325). Because of the meaning ascribed to these sites, theorists concerned with space and place would term ward meetinghouses places (Tuan, Relph, Cresswell). However, little work has been done to address the spatiality of LDS meetinghouses and mythologies. And while theorists of space and place have not focused on LDS sites and practices, Mormon studies scholars have neglected to bring the concepts of space and place to bear in their discussions of LDS practices. This project hopes to make interventions into the fields of critical space studies and Mormon studies, addressing the lacunae that exist in each. While this project cannot hope to fill the gaps completely, it is my hope that such an intervention will call attention to the current lack in scholarship and prompt further research in these fields.

Theorists of space and place have often focused their attention on cities (Harvey, Soja, Lefebvre, Massey, etc.). Others have spent time focusing on sites devoid of relationship and identity, such as convenience stores, airports, highways (Augé), while even others have looked at homes (Tuan, hooks). While Mircea Eliade has written about the creation of sacred space, he speaks to sacred sites generally. More recently Mormon studies scholar Douglas Davies has written about place and sense of self among Latter-

day Saints, but his discussion tends more toward time than place in the role of identity creation. Furthermore, his discussion neglects the sacredness of built structures.

Others have written about the creation of a distinct architectural style within the Mormon Church (Carter 209; Seymour n.p.; Meinig 49; Kimball n.p.), which served as a visual signifier of what Mormons call Zion: a city of God (Shipps qtd. in Meinig 49; *Hymns* 44), and served to create a Mormon cultural region (Meinig 33). This region is defined as much by spatial symbology as it is by visual signifiers. Zion is set apart from Babylon in Mormon discourse. Thus, the language and the architecture of Mormonism work to create an interior and an exterior, a center and a periphery. This is achieved visually through the standard plan architecture that is the contemporary practice of the Church building department (Seymour n.p.).

Others, such as Martha Sonntag Bradley have been critical of the standard plan architectural style, but have neglected the role of space and place in such discussions. Bradley argues that in giving primacy to function rather than form in building design, the Church has fostered a tendency toward movement-through (which, as mentioned above, would mean that buildings were spaces or non-places, rather than places), rather than meditation within, meetinghouses (“Steeple” 48). For Bradley, then, there is a loss of meaning in contemporary ward meetinghouses. This argument is echoed in Mark Leone’s “Why the Coalville Tabernacle had to be Razed,” in which he suggests that the symbolism, history, and meaning found in older, nineteenth and early twentieth century, meetinghouses needed to be replaced by ahistorical buildings devoid of meaning and symbolism in order to facilitate the rapid growth of the Church (Leone 38). While there are oblique references and possible inferences regarding the spatial nature of these

practices, explicit reference to the nature of space and place is absent from such discussions.

Ethan Yorgason, a geographer and Mormon studies scholar, has written extensively about the creation of a regional identity and draws heavily on spatial theory. His discussion tends to be regionally based rather than based in architectural design and practices. Similarly, Richard Francaviglia, a historical geographer, has written extensively about city-making and the use of maps in Mormonism. Architectural historian Thomas Carter has also written extensively regarding Mormon space, but his focus, too, is at the regional or city level. And while he uses individual buildings in creating his argument, his treatment of ward meetinghouses is but one piece in a larger story that also includes homes, temples, and commercial buildings. Furthermore, Carter's discussion deals mostly with nineteenth and early twentieth century meetinghouses, while I am looking at these meetinghouses in the contemporary moment.

And while my focus is on a crisis in Mormon architecture, I acknowledge that the LDS Church is not alone. Other writers and scholars are currently lamenting the movement away from sacred architectures within Christian religious traditions. Massimiliano Fuksas, an Italian architect, suggests that there is no sacred architecture anymore, but that architecture can lead toward spirituality. For Fuksas this is accomplished through distinction: spiritually-focused buildings ought to be distinct from other buildings (in Lang 45). Architect Mario Botta, however, sees architecture as sacred through its ability to transcend its function, resulting in an architecture that connects the user to recollections or experiences that are not immediately perceptible (in Lang 47). Uwe Michael Lang suggests that the loss of sacredness in architecture has arisen, in part,

through changes in theological currents rather than mere stylistic preference (58). Urban analyst Aaron M. Renn agrees that theology influences architectural practice in his discussion of protestant church buildings. In his analysis, Renn points to various components—an eschatology that encourages ephemerality and cultural adaptations such as rationality and consumerism, among others—that desacralize protestant sites of worship (“Erasing Distinction” 19-21). Elsewhere, Renn suggests that suburban spaces lack sacredness for many of the same reasons that protestant church buildings do—lack of transcendence, focuses on commercial establishments, and shifts in faith that lead to religion(s) being able to “inspire good works, but not great ones” (Renn, “Suburbs and Sacred Spaces” n.p.). Other critics of contemporary Christian, especially protestant, architecture comment on the horizontality of design that de-emphasizes the connection to heaven (Loveland and Wheeler 239), and the lack of distinct architecture, which causes church buildings to be confused with office buildings, strip malls, and warehouses (239-40)

While I build from the historical and regional arguments of Mormon studies scholars in order to explore the decisions and mythologies that have led to contemporary building practices, I focus on contemporary meetinghouses in particular, and hope to fit my argument into a larger conversation regarding sacred architectures. Following in the path that has been opened by scholars like those mentioned above, I hope to embark in a slightly new direction that will open up new avenues for exploring geographic and environmental Mormon studies.

Entering the Ward: Research Methods for Exploring Mormon Place

In order to better understand how LDS meetinghouses act upon the people who use them and how the users coconstruct the place(s) of these meetinghouses through both appropriate and transgressive practices, I engage multiple research methods. I begin by engaging in close readings and textual analysis of significant Mormon texts in order to better understand the spatial mythology of the LDS church. These texts include selections from the Mormon scriptural canon, which includes the Book of Mormon, The Holy Bible, The Doctrine and Covenants, and The Pearl of Great Price, along with historical and contemporary teachings from LDS Church leaders. Through such readings I gain insight into the spatial symbolism of the mythologies of the church and I articulate potential sites that might serve as points of intervention into current practices. Furthermore, I engage with historical moments during the initial years of the Church as well as policy changes through time that have led to the contemporary moment, especially regarding building policy. By analyzing scriptural and other significant Mormon texts and historical moments together, I link history and scripture in order to inform the concept of LDS spatial mythology that runs throughout this project.

Beyond analysis of these textual and historical moments, I also draw on fieldnotes (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw), recordings, and interview transcripts performed during my time as a participant-observer (Lindlof and Taylor; Lofland and Lofland) in a ward in near Salt Lake City, Utah. I engaged in this ethnographic fieldwork between October 2015 and March 2016, spending roughly 30 hours attending worship services and other activities in the Wasatch building. During my time in the field, I recorded field jottings that were then transformed into 79 pages of fieldnotes and analyzed for themes.

I also conducted email interviews with 11 members from one ward that uses the Wasatch building for worship services. Email is a useful medium for interviews because it allows shy people to participate who may not otherwise participate in a face-to-face or phone interview (Meho 1288), it facilitates disclosure of personal information because participants feel more anonymous (1289), and participants often maintain greater focus on the questions, providing responses that are more reflective than in other interview formats (1291). Furthermore, email interviews require little editing before being analyzed and allow for asynchronous interview times, allowing participants to respond at their convenience, and allowing me to interview multiple individuals simultaneously (1288). Analysis of these interviews helped elucidate practices, meanings, and members' sense of place within the ward buildings.

I chose the Wasatch building in Utah as a site of study in part because of its proximity to the center of the Mormon Church. The LDS Church is headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah, and the Wasatch building is roughly 17 miles from Church headquarters. Like many areas in Utah, the Wasatch Front has a large LDS population and, therefore exhibits certain cultural artifacts that exist due to the concentration of Mormon practitioners in the area. Due to high concentration of LDS Church members, LDS meetinghouses exist in high concentration as well. Such a high concentration of LDS meetinghouses creates a distinct and visually demarcated cultural region. Because of its position near the center (and headquarters) of the Mormon Church, the Wasatch building presents fertile ground for the study of Mormon culture, identity, and how these meetinghouses influence members.

Furthermore, the area surrounding the Wasatch building is comprised of both

semirural and suburban neighborhoods, and is in the process of developing. The suburban character of the location is typical of many locations throughout Utah and is representative of areas along Utah's Wasatch Front, which extends through Utah, Salt Lake, and Davis counties and is dominated by sprawling housing developments and strip-malls. Because the area is in the process of shifting from semirural to suburban neighborhoods, new developments are cropping up, which brings in new residents. With the influx of new residents, more ward buildings need to be constructed to house them. The Wasatch building is one such ward building.

The Wasatch building has been chosen in part because of its age. Built in 2010, the Wasatch building is representative of contemporary building practices in many ways. Being recently constructed, the ward building is designed following standard plans that are still in use. Currently the Church builds two styles of buildings: Independence and Heritage styles, which can be adjusted based on congregational needs (size of congregation). The Wasatch building is a Heritage style building. Thus, it is representative of other buildings built around the same time as well as newer buildings that are continuing to be built.

There is a caveat to this typicality, however. While the building follows a standard layout design, it was also part of a "green" building pilot program initiated by the LDS Church in 2010. Because of this, it is somewhat atypical in that it houses rooftop solar panels. And while other "green" design elements are featured, most are hidden behind the walls, away from sight. Thus, while the solar panels serve to differentiate this building from other ward buildings built around the same time, it is still quite representative of design features.

I acknowledge here my own subject position as a practicing member of the LDS Church. Having practiced since my childhood and having lived in Salt Lake City all but two years of my life, which were spent in Thailand as an LDS missionary, I understand that I take certain ideas, knowledges, and practices for granted. I acknowledge my position because I understand my subject position is necessarily biased for and against certain readings of LDS practice. Being an insider I am aware that certain practices pass me by unnoticed while others stand out more completely. I am, thus, in a peculiar position as I attempt to be both inside and outside at once. However, I feel that my subject position as an insider to the culture affords me valuable insights into the functioning of LDS culture in Utah as well as insights into the religious practices that exist. Throughout this project, however, I am self-reflexive in order to maintain an appropriate distance from the work, so as not to cloud my research with preexisting biases or merely anecdotal life experiences. I must proceed with caution.

Entering the Ward Meetinghouse: Moving Forward

Moving forward cautiously is important here, not only because of my subject position as an active participant in the Mormon church—not only because I am as steeped in the spatial mythologies and cultural practices as the other practitioners that I engage with—but because I am balancing on a precarious line between two seemingly opposite poles. On the one hand, I am arguing that Mormon ward buildings are non-places devoid of the meanings and emotional connections that so many theorists see as essential to the concept of place. On the other hand, I am arguing that ward buildings are highly significant places in the Mormon mind: houses of God, sacred sites of worship, spiritual refuges in a wicked world. It is between these two that I stand balancing.

Yet, some might argue, I am oversimplifying. I am reverting to the very dichotomies that I find problematic. True, I am oversimplifying. True, I have reverted to dichotomous pairings. True, this is problematic. And that is the point. While my analysis seeks to develop two conflicting arguments in an attempt to reconcile them, it also points to the problems endemic to such attempts at reconciliation. The fact that the ward building is at once a non-place and a religiously significant place is problematic.

In the chapters that follow I explore the inconsistencies within these buildings and point to practices that such inconsistencies engender, including transgressive practices. In doing so I argue that while contemporary building practices result in the proliferation of Mormon non-places, the practices that these non-places produce serve to designate ward buildings as distinct(ly) Mormon places, which have their basis in closely held mythologies. These mythologies, in turn, inform the building practices of the Church. Furthermore, these mythologies have empowered individuals and congregations within the Mormon church to (re)create their relationships with and understandings of the world, and in so doing have allowed them to reimagine the(ir) world after their own image.

In Chapter 2, I explore Augé's concept of non-place and introduce *place-ing* as a strategy of control over sense of place in order to establish my premise that ward buildings are, indeed, non-places, or that they exhibit strong non-place character. I explore some of the historical moments that influenced the shift from idiosyncratic to standardized building plans in order to substantiate my premise. I also explore how intentional design practices encourage strange(r)ness within ward buildings and congregations, which aligns with the idea of ward building as non-place.

In Chapter 3, however, I argue against the idea that ward buildings are non-places

through an exploration of spatial mythologies that create a distinctly Mormon sense of place within ward buildings. Such sense of place, I argue, is arrived at through *place-ing* strategies of the Church in order to create and maintain borders around contemporary Zion. I explore both spatial mythologies and contemporary practices such as standards of appearance in order to explore how mythology and policy inform contemporary identity within ward buildings.

Having argued that ward buildings are both non-places and places of great significance in Chapters 2 and 3, I turn, in Chapter 4, to the tension that these dialectical meanings exhibit within the building and how such tension influences lived practice. I explore how the tension of being “in the world but not of the world” (Cook n.p.) manifests historically, materially, and socially through everyday practices within the Mormon church generally and the Mormon ward building in particular.

Finally, I conclude by stepping back and looking at ideas of light and shadow, transgression, and multiplicity in order to suggest possible futures for LDS practitioners and the LDS Church generally. And while Chapter 5 concludes this project, it is in no way conclusive. Rather, I suggest possibilities, rather than actualities, and leave the creation of place to those whose place it is.

Notes

¹ In order to maintain participant anonymity, I have removed any site-specific names and affixed pseudonyms to the ward building and the ward congregation.

² According to a list compiled by the Project for Public Spaces, placemaking is: “Community-driven”, “Adaptable”, “Context Specific”, “Collaborative”, and “Sociable” (PPS n.p.). The community-driven aspect of placemaking is echoed by others as well (Mazumdar and Mazumdar; Friedmann). John Friedmann has argued that in order for placemaking to occur “planners need directly to engage those who reside in neighborhoods, and that this engagement means to establish a moral relation” that accepts as given the users’ right to the place or site in question (159). Another important aspect

regarding placemaking is found in Friedmann's words: scale. While it has been suggested that placemaking can be adapted to any scale (Aravot 202), it is uncommon to hear of placemaking at the building scale. What is used instead is architecture or design. Thus, I use placemaking to suggest a bottom-up approach that attempts to involve networks of stakeholders in order to meet the needs and desires of local community/ies (Peirce, Martin & Murphy 55).

CHAPTER 2

“IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF THE WORLD”: *PLACE*-ING AND THE CREATION OF MORMON NON-PLACE

Introduction

In the introduction to his book *In Place / Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*, Tim Cresswell argues that “expectations about behavior in place are important components in the construction, maintenance, and evolution of ideological values” (4). What Cresswell refers to as ideologies, Edward Relph calls “hopes, accomplishments, ambiguities, and even horrors of existence” (208) which rest between “objectively shared properties of environments and subjectively idiosyncratic experiences of them” (211). It is in understanding these expectations, hopes, accomplishments, ambiguities, and fears that sense of place is formed. Because sense of place emerges from between the objective and subjective realities, sense of place is understood both individually and socially “as a way of indicating that places are infused with meaning and feeling” (Rose 88-9). In short, sense of place is a way of understanding individual and social meanings in place.

The meanings of a place, however, may be emotionally barren. In other words, places may be devoid of emotional meanings and connections such as the hopes, accomplishments, ambiguities, and horrors that Relph suggests help define “place” as a concept. Furthermore, places may lack what Cresswell would call ideological values.

This lack of emotional and value-based meanings in a location, transforms some sites into what Marc Augé calls “non-places” (viii). In his book *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity*, Augé argues that “a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place” (63). Instead, non-places are “spaces of circulation, consumption, and communication” (viii), spaces where the individual does not exist in relation to history or identity. This dissociation with history translates into a dissociation with hopes, accomplishments, ambiguities, and horrors—all of which necessitate the existence of both a past and a future.

Being devoid of what may be referred to as traditional or emotional meanings, however, does not make these non-places meaningless. Rather, non-places have particular meanings as sites of “circulation, consumption and communication” (viii). They are sites defined by a present, “surrendered to solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the temporary and ephemeral” (63) that “often puts the individual in contact only with another image of himself” (64). In other words, in non-places, individuals cease to exist in relation to other individuals or other historical moments. Rather, they merely exist. They are merely there. Nevertheless, as Augé points out, “there are no ‘non-places’ in the absolute sense of the term” (viii), suggesting that all non-places are, to some extent, places and vice-versa and, therefore, are associated with sense of place.

For Augé non-places are locations to be moved through rather than stayed in. They are sites of anonymity in part due to their ubiquity. They are expressways and shopping malls, airports, and hotel chains. Because non-places are everywhere, they do not belong anywhere. They are for passing through (59)—the “traveler’s space” (70)—and present themselves as both the space and the instructions for the use of the space

(xvii) to everyone simultaneously (81), creating a feeling of anonymity and solitude in the user(s) of the non-place (86). In order to obtain this anonymity and solitude, however, non-places require users to provide proof of their innocence (82) or belonging. For Augé, proving belonging is accomplished through showing a passport or a credit card (82): it is a hyper-individualization. This proof of hyper-individuality then allows the user to enter into anonymity. And in the anonymity of non-place, recognition prevails over knowledge: non-places are not known, they are recognized (27), they become generally familiar.

Augé's definition of non-place, suggests places that are anonymous in their familiarity. Because they are so ubiquitous, they are seen but not known. Often non-places exist beyond the realm of personal attachment or personal meaning. They are simply there. Nevertheless, this perpetual being there, along with the other non-place characters, creates a sense of place, or a sense of non-place. And these sense(s) of non-place are not in opposition to other sense(s) of place that may exist in a location, but in dialectical tension with other meanings. In other words, a sense of non-place and a sense of place may exist simultaneously but be understood separately. This is evident in roadside memorials. While the road may act as a non-place—a place to pass through on the way from here to there—for most drivers, it also holds specific memories of an individual or individuals who lost their lives at that particular location. In this way, the road is at once significant and insignificant, memorable and easily forgotten.

While non-place characteristics and sense of place can coexist simultaneously at a site, and while there are places in which meanings are created unintentionally (e.g., roadside memorials), there are also instances in which a specific, desired, sense of place

is prescribed to a location, and certain expectations or standards of behavior are put in place in order to maintain that sense of place. Such a sense of place may be based on class or racial distinctions and reinforced by practices such as denying service to particular individuals. Or this sense of place may be based on consumerist ideals and create, to some degree, non-places from places, such as the paving of roads in (which encourages the driving of cars through) National Parks, creating (non)places to be seen from cars, recognized, and passed through.¹ The act of prescribing and maintaining specific sense of place is what I will refer to as *place-ing*. *Place-ing* is a strategy of control that establishes a desired sense of place through the enforcement of specific practices, which, in turn, perpetuate and reinforce the established sense of place. As I suggested earlier, place and non-place can exist together, and *place-ing* can contribute to both the creation of place and the creation of non-place.

In defining *place-ing*, I am mindful of the socially-constructed nature of place, but I also wish to suggest the relation between power and place. *Place-ing* is a means of creating (sense of) place in a dictatorial manner by filling a location with certain characteristics, practices, and/or people. It is an example of what Michel de Certeau calls strategies, which are “calculations (or manipulations) of power” (35) and are “an effort [made by those in power] to delimit one’s own place in a world bewitched by the invisible powers of the other” (36), that focuses especially on the creation of (sense of) place. In other words, *place-ing* is a top-down strategy of power and control that prescribes behaviors in place and reinforces a desired sense(s) of place.

There are some who would argue that *place-ing* is no different than placemaking. And, indeed, they do share similarities. I would argue, however, that while *place-ing* is a

top down strategy of control, placemaking is a bottom up means of creating place. This is because placemaking has, at its core, the idea of community (Schneekloth and Shibley; *PPS*; Mazumdar and Mazumdar; Friedman). Placemaking is a practice that asks communities to determine how they want their place to be. It is a means of re-claiming the right to the city, of reimagining and recreating place according to the needs and desires of the people who use the place (Harvey 4). While placemaking, in its current practical usage, attempts to involve networks of stakeholders in order to meet the needs and desires of local community/ies (Peirce, Martin & Murphy 55), *place*-ing is a top-down approach aimed at dictating to, not engaging with, the occupants or users of the place. And it is this dictatorial approach that illuminates the power relations of and in place.²

Place-ing, then, is more than just architecture or design; it is a means of creating and policing a specific and intended sense of place. While it has been argued that most of a place's meaning (and, therefore, most of its sense of place) comes from those who use it (Rapoport 20), "through personalization—through taking possession, completing [the structure], changing it" (21), *place*-ing works to limit the personalization of place, thereby enforcing a particular meaning.

Through such *place*-ing, the LDS Church creates a desired sense of place in its meetinghouses. A similar use of *place*-ing can be seen in the design practices of Starbucks, through which its stores are filled with a "limited range of colours, furniture, light fixtures, murals and artwork" in order to create a sense of place (Aiello and Dickinson 304). Another example of *place*-ing is apparent in the expulsion of eleven women from a Napa Valley Wine Train for "laughing while black." Management and

staff created a space for white bodies, and found the “quite loud and boisterous” laughter of the black women inappropriate and offensive. In order to maintain the train’s sense of place, the women needed to be removed (Neate n.p.). As these examples show, *place-ing* is a top-down means of dictating, maintaining, and reinforcing a dominant sense of place.

In confronting the question of whether and how (sense of) place is created from non-place within LDS ward meetinghouses, I must first substantiate my premise that ward buildings can be interpreted as non-places. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, ward buildings are geographically established sites of congregation for LDS practitioners. Despite the specific geographies of ward buildings, however, contemporary meetinghouses are “in the world but not of the world” (Cook n.p.). In other words, contemporary ward buildings are *in* locations, but not *of* them; rather, they are standardized buildings that can (and do) exist anyplace. It is in part this lack of site specificity that contributes to the non-place character of ward buildings. However, to suggest that generality is the only contributor would be to grossly oversimplify the concept of non-place and how I employ it in relation to contemporary Mormon ward meetinghouses.

In arguing that LDS ward meetinghouses are non-places, I will discuss the history of Mormon architecture and its relation to the concept of Zion-building, which is the LDS practice of creating a community of the righteous in preparation for the second coming of Christ. This will lead me into a discussion of the movement toward standard-plan architecture, which is the current practice for designing and constructing meetinghouses of the LDS Church. My discussion of standard-plan architecture will lead to an analysis of architectural drawings as well as an analysis of policies regarding design, construction,

and maintenance of buildings. In my discussion of standard-plan architecture, I argue that the LDS Church has created suburban, everyday buildings that act as non-places and undermine the sacredness of its meetinghouses. Furthermore, I suggest that ward buildings qualify as non-places through intentionally prescribed and clearly defined ideas of appropriateness, which govern both the materiality of ward buildings and the corporeality of ward members' bodies and practices within ward buildings. This intentionality in design and maintenance is an instance of *place-ing*, and is a strategy of control enacted by the LDS Church. Ideas of appropriateness ascribed in ward buildings through *place-ing* contribute to the sense of (non)place within LDS meetinghouses and, as I will show, allow LDS practitioners to prove their innocence³ (Augé 82)—their righteousness and their belonging—as they commute toward the kingdom of God.

**“The Same Yesterday, Today, and Forever”:
A History of Mormon Non-Place**

The writer of the American West, Wallace Stegner, wrote that “No place is a place until things that have happened in it are remembered in history, ballads, yarns, legends, or monuments” (n.p.). History, according to Stegner, is important to place: it gives place meaning. I posit that history is equally as important to non-place, though in non-places, history is important in its dissociation with meaning-making. While history may be relegated to the shelves of curiosities (Augé 89) in non-places, it is, however, important in understanding how ward buildings came to be standardized, and how this standardization, in turn, led to the proliferation of Mormon non-places.

Building Zion

In April of 1829—one year before the official organization of the Church—Joseph Smith received a revelation to “bring forth and establish the cause of Zion” (*Doctrine & Covenants* 6.6). This revelation is one of the earliest of Joseph Smith’s canonized revelations, and it has played a significant role throughout the history of the LDS Church. For the early Saints, establishing the cause of Zion meant building the city of Zion. For Mormon practitioners, and especially for the early Saints, Zion is a literal city where “a godly society worthy of Christ at his coming” would reside (Bushman, *Mormonism* 36). As LDS historian Richard Bushman suggests, Zion was both a “place of refuge from calamity and the place of divine instruction” (45). With the growth of the LDS Church, the concept of Zion has become more symbolic than literal, but, as Bushman argues, “Mormons still think of their congregations as places of peace, equality, and unity, and of themselves as a distinctive people” (48). Because members are encouraged to view these buildings as places of refuge, a distinct sense of place may be fostered within them.⁴ However, such a zionic sense of place is in dialectical tension with the non-place characteristics of the ward buildings and the sense of non-place that those characteristics engender.

In his book *The Mapmakers of New Zion*, geographer and historian Richard Francaviglia discusses how early Mormons relied on the maps produced by Joseph Smith and Frederick G. Williams (the ideas were Smith’s and Williams performed the drafting) to literally build cities of Zion. These maps depicted a square plat that could theoretically be built anywhere and that was suggestive of a “culture of refinement” (Bushman, *Refinement* 140-69) befitting the city of God.

Francaviglia contends, however, that while these square plans may appear perfect or godly on paper, in practice, a grid plan often ends up being in conflict with nature and the geography of a location, “impos[ing] on nature rather than letting nature dictate where a boundary might naturally occur” (28). Despite this conflict with physical geography, a grid-based city allowed central authority to watch over the activities in the city and thus maintain order. Furthermore, rectangular, grid-based cities were quickly and easily built (27-8). By adopting a grid-based design that was not dependent upon location, the early Zion-building projects at once laid the foundation for the standardized architectural plans of the contemporary Church and established a panoptical place that encouraged prescribed standards of behavior and worked to reinforce the intended sense of place in the city of Zion. In other words, the Zion-building of the early Church relied on *place-ing* in order to create a unique sense of place in early Mormon cities.

Because making Zion was making the city of God, and because “God is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Book of Mormon, Mormon 9.9), the plans for Zion needed to be similarly unchanging. In this way, Zion, like the God whose city it was, was universal. The plat of Zion could be quickly adapted to any location, regardless of actual variations in physical geography and topography. By creating a standard plat, the Church could plant zionic cities across the Midwestern United States, or anywhere else that God deemed suitable (Francaviglia 32). In this way, the city of Zion was *in* the world but not *of* the world.

Building and gathering (in) Zion was one of the primary preoccupations of the early Church (Carter xx; Francaviglia 31; Underwood 26). Because they lived in Zion, early Mormons were able to prove that they belonged to Zion and God simply by being

there⁵ (Carter 13). Always-already belonging to the kingdom of God meant that the early Saints did not need to explicitly define themselves and could instead express variety *within* Zion, so long as that variety did not overlap with the world of Babylon (Carter 15).

However, around the turn of the twentieth century, the LDS Church reversed its policy on gathering to Utah—the center of God’s kingdom on earth—in favor of building Zion where members already lived (Prince and Wright 199). This policy change redefined the concept of Zion. Whereas it had been a geographical region, it was now an abstract spiritual idea. Because of this, new methods of marking the boundary between Zion and Babylon were required. Such a redefinition of Zion contributed to the standardization of Church policies known as the correlation effort.

Correlating Zion

This correlation effort was a response to unprecedented growth, and was manifest in policies through which programs, lessons, auxiliaries⁶—along with ward buildings—were increasingly standardized. Its aim was to unify programs, omit redundancies, and streamline the administration of a Church that was rapidly globalizing.⁷

One of the Church leaders in charge of this correlation effort was Harold B. Lee. Lee argued that through correlation, the Church might “possibly and hopefully look forward to the consolidation and simplification of church curricula, church publications, church buildings, church meetings, and many other important aspects of the Lord’s work” (qtd. in *Church History* 563). In Lee’s words can be heard a hopefulness and optimism. For Lee, standardization (in architecture as well as in administration and practice), which results in simplification, would further the Church’s mission to establish the kingdom of God on the Earth (Doctrine and Covenants, Explanatory Introduction v). This

simplification, however, created a “generalized vocabulary” (Augé 88) for meetinghouse architecture, which “addressed simultaneously and indiscriminately” (81) all members. In other words, through standardizing its meetinghouses, the Church created a shared vocabulary, which “weaves the tissue of habits, educates the gaze, and informs the landscapes” (Augé 87) of Church members and is typical of Augé’s definition of non-place.

This generalized vocabulary is rephrased by Benedict Anderson as the “accumulating memory of print” (80) and contributes to a sense of community within the LDS church. This accumulated memory of print, this shared architectural vocabulary, allows members to prove that they belong to Zion, thus proving their righteousness or innocence (82), simply by entering into a universalized ward building. Contributing further to this shared sense of belonging to a(n imagined) community is the regular practice of Sunday church attendance.⁸ Each Sunday a(ny) member “has complete confidence in [all members’] steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity” (B. Anderson 26) at their designated ward building, and belonging to the community of Zion is accomplished.

The shared memory of print finds further expression through a standard set of textual works, which are both scriptural and educational. This body of works contains the central tenets of the Mormon faith, and members are encouraged to read these works regularly.⁹ Through this standardization of printed scriptural texts, any member of a ward can imagine that the other members of the ward (and Church more generally) are sharing in the same experience of reading from the same set of scriptural texts as they are each day. Furthermore, the standardization of curricula means that the same lesson is taught on

the same day in all the wards of the Church.

Because the experience is replicable (even if imaginatively) the beliefs that arise from such an experience are also replicable, leading to an imagined standardization of beliefs. Thus, the community of Saints is imagined to share uniform beliefs, which crystalize into congregational and individual identity. The Church becomes defined by its shared beliefs, and the individual is defined in relation to these centralized beliefs. To rephrase this point: through the encouragement of standardization by church leadership, the individual, housed within the congregation, finds its identity in relation to the imagined uniformity of the ward (and Church) body; the imagined body of the congregation contains a corpus of standard beliefs, which define the congregation. This imagined congregation is, in turn, housed within the physical body of the ward: the meetinghouse.

Building Buildings

During the early history of the Mormon Church, the community of worshipers built its meetinghouses and places of worship using their own resources and talents (Starrs 330). Because of this the members of the congregational body were able to inscribe their meetinghouse(s) with distinct characteristics and symbology that allowed for a highly personalized form of worship. The very act of building meetinghouses was viewed as a form of worship, of making an offering to their God, and, therefore, received particular attention to beauty, detail, and craftsmanship (*Church History* 164). The meetinghouse was a personal spiritual investment and was invested with personal and symbolic meaning.¹⁰

Many of the older meetinghouses in Utah retain the symbols of the past. This,

however, can be problematic for Church leadership because, according to Augé, “allusion to the past complicates the present” (56) and, according to Mark Leone, “[a]rtifacts of the past symbolize attitudes and behavior of the past. Symbols motivate behavior. Therefore, the artifacts (symbols) of the past may conflict with and even impede new and different behavior” (31). If symbols of the past encourage behaviors and beliefs that do not correspond with current practices, these symbols may hinder the progress of the Church and must be abolished. Thus, buildings that were designed and created as gifts to God may both misrepresent contemporary Mormons and remind them “every day of all that they [are] not, and all they [have] stopped being” (ibid. 32).

While the early church members designed and built their own meetinghouses, their contribution was diminished over time in favor of centralized and standardized planning and building.¹¹ Martha Bradley’s words summarize this shift well:

The bond between the nineteenth century Saint and his chapel was intimate and complete. He helped build it, his wife helped furnish it and they both contributed to its upkeep. The modern-day Mormon chapel was not built by the congregation but by a building contractor and the chapel itself would probably in ten or twenty years be used by a different group altogether. (qtd. in Starrs 330)

And while members did help in some aspect of the completion of the ward building until the 1970s, their efforts were put toward “[t]hings that require[d] labor, not skill, care, not craftsmanship” (Leone 37). In these efforts interchangeability was favored over personality because anyone could help paint a building, while only a few could carve a pulpit. This subtle shift away from skill and craft and toward standardization signaled a shift away from meaning and history.¹²

An example of this shift away from history is evidenced in the transition from

meaning-inscribed craftsmanship found in older ward buildings to the ward display case located in the lobby or foyer outside the chapel. These display cases have been used to exhibit everything from basketball trophies to missionary plaques (Leone 37). As Leone further suggests, the meanings evoked by these memorabilia are not specific to the ward building; rather, the meanings are linked to the “movable objects that are universally recognized tokens” (37). Due to the transience and universality of these tokens, no lasting or specific symbolism is held within the building. Leone further suggests that while “[h]uman energy and emotions are tied up in a Mormon building today...they are not tied up in ways that are visible, immovable parts of the building” (37). Instead meanings and emotions are tied up in the temporality of tokens such as missionary plaques (Figure 1), which carry the (much abridged) history of the ward for no more than two years before they are replaced by the next wave of plaques. Such symbols may hold strong meanings for members, but those meanings are soon displaced and replaced.

Missionary plaques present a poignant example of the exoticization of history that Augé describes as characteristic of non-places (89). Because full-time missionary work is a key rite of passage for young men (and increasingly for young women) into adulthood, the plaque carries significant symbolic weight. Each plaque represents an individual who is traversing the path toward adulthood, often in a foreign, “exotic” land. For members of the ward, the plaque represents the stories about the young missionary’s efforts at bringing others into the Church. While away from home, these missionaries are fetishized: they are prayed for, stories of their successes are shared, letters are written to them. They are central to the meaning of the ward: the missionary’s successes are the ward’s successes. Upon the missionary’s return, however, the plaque is removed and



Figure 1. Missionary plaque. © Ruedigar Paul Matthes.

another one takes its place. The missionary's centrality to the meaning of the ward, like the plaque, is easily replaced, exchanged for new plaques, new people, and new meanings.

That such meanings can be so easily replaced signifies a tension between place and non-place that is evident in the missionary plaque example. Because each plaque represents a physical person, it represents a series of "hopes, accomplishments...and even horrors" (Relph 208) regarding the person pictured and contributes to the meaning of a place. While these plaques may contribute emotional meaning to the ward building, the plaque is also merely a token devoid of any lasting meaning because it is replaceable and interchangeable. It does not matter *which* plaque is on display but that *a* plaque is on display. The meaning is not derived from the specific individual represented, but the idea represented. In this sense, the missionary plaque symbolizes an abstract concept, which is more important than the individual (hopes, accomplishments, etc.) because, while the person may be replaced, the concept is unchangeable.

The tension between sense of place and non-place expressed in the missionary plaque is further evidenced in the concept of shared vocabulary. While the correlation effort standardized curricula in efforts to unify an increasingly global and diverse Church, I wish to suggest that the standardization of built texts also contributed to this shared sense of community and (non-)place in ward meetinghouses. Through this shared vocabulary, the Church was able to: "offer a clear identity and distinction to its followers" (Meinig 40). This identity was informed by the belief that they were a peculiar people, a people chosen of God, a people who, like the plat of Zion and like the standardized ward buildings, were in the world but not of the world (*Joseph Fielding*

Smith 241). One of the implications of standard-plan architecture—as well as, and in combination with, standardization of curricula and administration—as opposed to local or regional specificity, was that the Church began to “fabricate the ‘average man’, defined as the user” of the ward building (Augé 81): the ward member. Buildings were no longer designed and built for (and by) specific users, but for *any* Mormon member.

Because of this fabricated universalization, the Church was able to produce a shared identity for all members. By relying on the standardized plans for meetinghouses, the Church began to distinguish itself from the larger world and create a distinct identity for itself. According to Jan Shipps:

The very fact that these clearly identifiable LDS structures could be found in town after town, and suburb after suburb cultivated among the Saints what might be called a Zion sense, making the very LDS meetinghouses themselves agents of assimilation and signals that wherever the Saints gather, there Zion is. (qtd. in Meinig 49)

Through standardization the ward meetinghouse became part of a “cosmology that produces the effects of recognition” (Augé 86): ward buildings became recognized symbols of Mormonism, symbols of Zion, and home. To use the words of one Mormon, “Coming upon a Mormon meetinghouse in a strange town is like finding your favorite food franchise when you are travelling. Once you’ve located the church and Colonel Sanders it’s as if you never left home” (qtd. in Leone 38). This sense of home is one “paradox of non-place” suggested by Augé. This paradox is that “a foreigner lost in a country he does not know (a ‘passing stranger’) can feel at home there only in the anonymity of motorways, service stations, big stores or hotel chains” (86). I add to this list LDS ward meetinghouses. Like familiar hotel chains, restaurants, or big-box stores, LDS ward buildings engender a familiarity that is anything but familiar. Rather, the

relationship of the foreigner or the stranger to the building and its congregation are not relationships of knowledge, but of recognition (27, 86); they are relationships of anonymity. Furthermore, that this feeling of home could be felt anywhere in the world where a ward meetinghouse was located emphasizes the “generic and place-unspecific” (Starrs 336) nature of the standard-plan meetinghouses.

By erasing the symbols of the past and of the place and replacing them with a new, easily accessible symbology, the Church created an intentionally neutral (read: non-specific) building (Leone 37-8) empty of particular and local meaning other than the blanket meaning of Mormonism, which was not fixed or permanent, but changeable and adaptable. The meetinghouse that once stood as a symbol of individual and collective sacrifice and expression was replaced with a functional building devoid of any explicit connection to the individual or the location. The shift from custom-built meetinghouses to standard plans, then, moved church architecture, and specifically the ward building into the realm of similitude: the realm of non-place (83).

“A Resting Place for the Weary Traveler”: Familiarity, Travelers, and Non-Place

The standardization that contributed to the non-place character of ward buildings is enhanced by the architectural and design choices that enter into the standard plans of the LDS Church. These standard plans suburbanized (P. Anderson 476-7) and subsequently diluted the sacredness within ward meetinghouses as the everyday and the ecclesiastical were seamlessly merged through architecture and design elements. The merging of the sacred and the secular is evident in Thomas Carter’s treatment of Mormon settlements in the Sanpete valley of Utah. Carter suggests that, while the LDS Church

began planning, designing, and building according to a worldview that privileged the sacred, over time secularization entered into planning and designing, and the paradigmatic worldview shifted. In other words, sacredness was shifted from the center to the periphery in order to accommodate changing cultural landscapes (xxix-xxx).

This shift in cultural landscapes that privileged the secular over the sacred could also be understood in a shift in cultural trajectory, rather than a shift in the center itself. In building his argument for non-places, Marc Augé describes such a shift using French towns and autoroutes as his object. He suggests that while autoroutes used to pass through the centers of towns, they now circumvent town centers (in favor of more direct and expeditious routes). The centers of these towns, once discoverable by drivers, are now merely alluded to through text and images on billboards. The place was replaced by representation, and the town became no more significant than the text used to describe it (78). Meanings became prescribed, not discovered. Places became recognized (by a name or an alluded-to landmark), not known, from the non-places of transit.

Like the French autoroutes that moved out of town centers, LDS ward buildings have been designed in a way that circumvents the sacred center in favor of the secular everyday. By circumventing the sacred, the Church redefined the sacred as ephemeral, like the missionary plaques and photographs of the Church's first presidency that hang on the walls, as something to be recognized. In other words, contemporary design practices absolve worshipers "of the need to stop or even look" (78) at the sacred because the sacred is presented to them in the quotidian design. As with other non-places, it is enough to recognize the meanings (i.e., sacredness) to which ward buildings allude.

Evidence of such secularization of space is found in an address by D. Todd

Christofferson, a member of the quorum of twelve apostles, given to LDS youth in 2006. In his address, Christofferson bemoans the increasingly casual appearance of LDS churchgoers. He begins by recounting the story of a young woman who moved into a new ward congregation. While on her first Sunday she dressed in a manner that gave the “impression of youthful grace,” she felt over-dressed. In time, she became more casual in her appearance, fitting in with the other young women in the ward (n.p.). Christofferson remarks, “casual dress at holy places and events...says ‘I don’t get it. I don’t understand the difference between the sacred and the profane’” (n.p.). While I agree with his assertion that appearance can express (mis)understanding, I argue that there is more to the story than an individual’s understanding of a place and its significance. In order to have an understanding (or sense) of a place, there first needs to be a place.

Ward buildings, however, embody both the sacred and the profane, troubling Christofferson’s argument and Mircea Eliade’s suggestion that “spatial nonhomogeneity finds expression in the experience of an opposition between space that is sacred...and all other space” (20). Rather than being sites of singular meaning, then, LDS ward buildings are sites of mixed and diluted meanings. This creates a tension in Christofferson’s claims that “meetinghouses are dedicated to the Lord as sacred space” and that “A sense of the sacred should lead us to act and speak with reverence in and around these buildings. It would lead us to dress a certain way when we are there” (n.p.). Ward meetinghouses, according to LDS leadership, are sacred sites worthy of respect. And yet these buildings are also social and athletic sites. While ward buildings are used for worship and sacred ordinances on Sunday, they are used for dinners, dances, athletic events, and other activities during the week.¹³ Thus, while on Sundays the buildings are used for sacred

purposes, the other six days of the week are dedicated to appropriate secular activities.¹⁴

Because ward buildings not only contain, but mix, both sacred and profane, the space of the ward building is homogenized. This aligns with Paul Anderson's assertion that ward buildings are designed with a suburban modernism (476-7), suggesting that contemporary ward buildings are not aesthetically differentiated from the suburban homes and strip malls that surround them. This homogenization through suburbanization makes one sense of place (be it of an office complex, strip mall, or ward building) indistinguishable from the next, creating placeless and anonymous non-places.

Evidence of this suburban homogeneity is the Wasatch Building in Utah where I performed my fieldwork (Figure 2). The Wasatch building is a red brick building with bands of local stone around the base of the piers (Nexus 201). Viewing the building from the sidewalk that parallels the street to the west of the building, one is greeted by a verdant lawn, not unlike the lawns of the houses in the surrounding neighborhoods,



Figure 2. Wasatch Building. © Ruedigar Paul Matthes.

before seeing a rock and native plant garden that abuts the building itself. The building is flanked by two large parking lots that are connected behind the building. A sign reads: “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Visitors Welcome.”

Unlike Catholic cathedrals and many other religious edifices, the ward building is stripped of adornment. In his book *Places of Worship: 150 Years of Latter-day Saint Architecture*, architect Richard Jackson suggests that the LDS Church has “no tradition of monumental buildings for meetinghouses” (ix). Rather, the Church has followed the traditions of other Protestant sects and used nonecclesiastical and quite secular building designs (Sovik 21), following the idea that “[t]he presence of God is not assured by things or symbols or by buildings, but by Christian people” (33) and that the meetinghouse “is an empty vessel, a tent, filled and activated only by the worshipping assembly” (Kieckheffer 240). Furthermore, in line with certain strains of architectural thought that suggest that meetinghouses should fit in with, not stand apart from, the larger world because distinctive architecture separates the building from the world it is meant to inspire (271), ward buildings are designed according to “fine residential or light commercial design modes” (Jackson ix) and suburban modernism (P. Anderson 476-7).¹⁵

This secular design is evident in the Wasatch building. The red brick and local stone front is topped by a simple white steeple with a faux-window. This is, perhaps, the only feature of the building that is suggestive of a religious purpose. On the street-facing side of the building, there are no points of entry. Rather, the entrances are on the sides and rear of the building—sides which do not allude to the sacred as does the front—and meant to be accessed from the parking lot(s). Thus, congregants and worshipers are required to enter the building from the secular space of the parking lot through uninspired

entrances with no allusion to sacredness. Like the driver on the non-place of French autoroutes who sees references to cities without entering them, the Mormon practitioner is presented with an allusion of sacredness in the steeple, but asked to pass by and move through the secular and mundane non-place of the parking lot and the doors that greet it.

This movement from the road to the parking lot to the vestibule of the ward building works together with the suburban modernism of the ward building to blur the distinction between the sacred and the profane. Rather than creating nonhomogenous space, the ward building reinforces the homogeneity of suburban place and the anonymity of non-place. This homogeneity troubles Eliade's claim that thresholds are sites of transition between distinct types of space. For Eliade, the threshold marks a distinction between the sacred and the profane, and yet provides a site of communication between the two worlds (25). A parishioner, upon passing over the threshold of a church, understands that s/he is passing between worlds. S/he is able to leave the profane at the door and enter into the sanctuary of the church, the house of God.

While the threshold of the Wasatch building may be attempting to create a distinction between worlds, no such distinction is apparent. Rather, the glass doors and the vestibules enter into a carpeted foyer with couches, end-tables, and mass-produced art prints ordered from a catalog (*Handbook 2* 192). The entrance is, if anything, underwhelming. Rather than being lifted to a higher spiritual plane, the churchgoer feels as if s/he is entering the waiting room of a Mormon dentist's office: the space of the ward building is not elevated in style. Instead, it is mundane. The dark-colored, industrial-grade carpeting, which is used throughout the building, and heavy-duty floor mats suggest heavy use and worldly materiality, not the ethereality of the sacred. The simple

(and mismatched upholstery of) couches and chairs, end-tables, and lamps; the white walls and framed prints of scripture stories, present mass-produced meanings, which, like the buildings themselves, could (and do) exist anywhere.

Unlike Eliade's thresholds, then, the thresholds and vestibules of the Wasatch building do not serve as points of transition between distinct spaces. The non-place of the parking lot runs into the non-place of the building's foyer; the secular world of strip malls and office spaces and even the suburban home, is reflected in the building. Thus, the ward building becomes a space of the everyday, and no transition, no adjustment, is needed. As Agué writes, "there are spaces in which the individual feels himself to be a spectator without paying much attention to the spectacle" (70) because the spectacle is no longer spectacular, but ordinary. These sites, in which spectator and spectacle are distanced (74), are non-places. The worshiper, who enters the ward meetinghouse in hopes of experiencing the sacred that should exist in the house of God, is confronted with the neutral and uninspiring façade and features that contribute to the non-place character of the ward building.

These everyday and secular aspects of the buildings are further evinced in the material architectural and design elements of the buildings themselves. In an analysis of as-built drawings of the Wasatch Building¹⁶ in Utah, it is clear that the sacred and the secular (or the profane) are in tension within the built environment. While the original plats of Zion were drawn in relation to the sacred (temple) center, the Heritage 09T style buildings place the cultural hall—a basketball court—at the center (Figure 3). While this certainly has practical application as overflow seating for the chapel, the placement of the cultural hall suggests a secularization of the ward building. In this way, the architecture

itself creates a distraction from the sacredness, which it purportedly encourages. It presents the secular as more important than the sacred while simultaneously arguing the other side as well. The architecture itself, then, is divided.

Even if the placement of the cultural hall is viewed as solely pragmatic, the fact that the chapel can, and is supposed to, open into the cultural hall, allowing for greater seating capacity¹⁷ suggests a blending of the sacred and the secular and contributes to the non-place character of the meetinghouse. An illustration helps illuminate the tension between the sacred and the profane. Throughout the year, but especially during the winter months, the cultural hall is used for athletic events, especially basketball. During these basketball games, it is not uncommon—though it is discouraged—for participants to become aggravated and utter profanities. Because place is both product and producer (Lefebvre 85), the language used and the behaviors expressed by the participants create

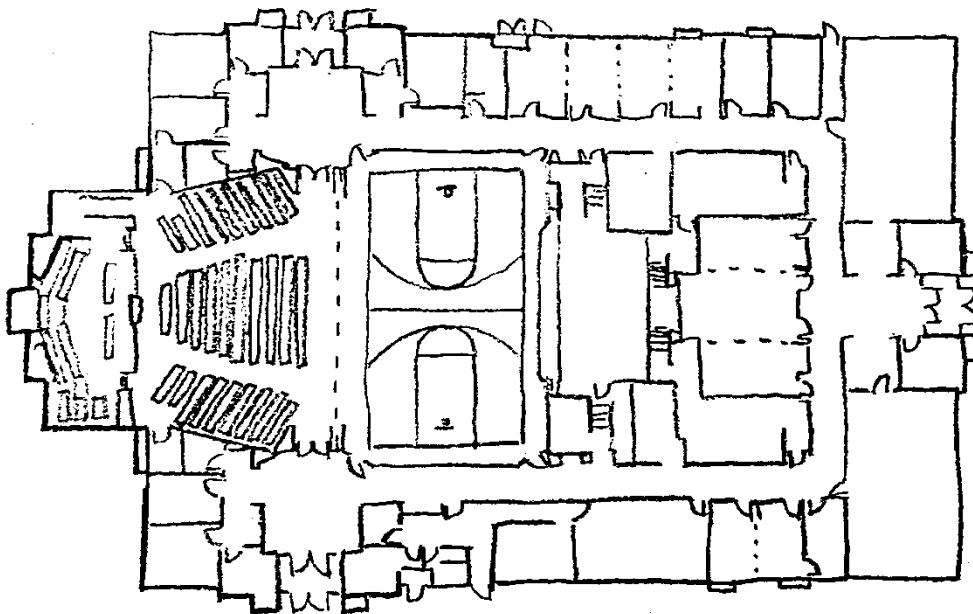


Figure 3. Heritage 09T floor plan. © Ruedigar Paul Matthes.

the meaning of the cultural hall and it becomes a profane space. The following Sunday, however, that space may be used as an extension of the sacred chapel. Sitting in the overflow seating, it is difficult not to note the basketball standards and the free-throw lines that are permanent fixtures to the room. These material features remind the users of the other, profane, uses for this space, and tension is created.

Furthermore, the exchange between the sacred and the profane is bidirectional. While the chapel is meant to extend into the cultural hall, the opposite also occurs. It is standard practice for chapels to be carpeted. This dampens the sound of footsteps, allowing for a quiet reverence to prevail during sacrament meetings. Cultural halls, on the other hand, are primarily basketball courts with hard surfaces.¹⁸ When used to increase seating capacity, the cultural hall does not allow for the same quiet reverence of the chapel. Footsteps and the movement of folding chairs are not only audible, but accentuated due to quietness of the chapel. Thus, while the sacredness of the chapel—exhibited through music, talks, and the passing of the sacrament—extends back into the cultural hall, the irreverence of the cultural hall interrupts that quietness, and the sacred is secularized. With this mixing of meaning comes a homogenization of space, which encourages a lack of particular meaning. Rather, the meaning becomes generic and the ward building becomes a mere container, a non-place, wherein certain actions and ideas circulate.

Through the combination of ecclesiastical and nonecclesiastical activities that occur in the ward buildings, and through the generic, suburban design elements of the buildings, the LDS Church has created a building that could be—and is—built anywhere. And while the Church’s official stance is that “the culture, the surroundings, and the

building regulations of a particular area” are taken into account (Seymour 2) when constructing a building, this is troubled by the use of standard plans. Thus, instead of site-specific buildings, regional leaders may decide between one of two standard plans currently used by the Church—Independence and Heritage—when contemplating a new meetinghouse (*Meetinghouse Standard Plans* n.p.). Regardless of geographical and cultural contexts surrounding a building site, the meetinghouse is designed to have a standard look based on a standard plan (Seymour 1), resulting in a landscape dotted with generic buildings.

Such generality of design, such placeless-ness, creates a landscape dotted with non-places. As stated above, these non-places create a generalizable familiarity and allow for easy movement between ward buildings. Furthermore, in creating this generalizable familiarity, in creating this sense of home, the LDS Church has resorted to creating cloned buildings, which are “all much more neutral, much more replaceable” (Leone 38): buildings which can be easily left. In creating universal “homes”, the LDS Church has created non-places, for, as Augé writes, non-places are defined by the paradox of feeling at home in anonymous familiarity. According to Augé, to the foreigner or traveler “an oil company logo is a reassuring landmark; among the supermarket shelves he falls with relief on sanitary, household or food products validated by multinational brand names” (86). The traveler feels at home in strange(r)ness through the recognition of token familiarity.

Likewise, because of standardized architecture, Mormons across the globe can travel or move and feel “as if [they] never left home” (Leone 38). Just as certain travelers find comfort in the familiar signs of hotel or fast food chains, so Mormons can feel

comfort in the familiar buildings that are a sign of the(ir) faith. But in creating this universal home, to modify Augé's argument slightly, the Church created a "world of [standard plan meetinghouse architecture]" in which "people are always, and never, at home" (87), and ward buildings become simultaneously places of significant religious and social meaning(s) and replaceable non-places of "enfeeble[d]" (88) generalities.

As mentioned above, the Church's official policy states that "the culture, the surroundings, and the building regulations of a particular area" must be taken into account (Seymour 2) in the construction of new buildings. But how sensitive can universalized standard plans be to local cultures and surroundings? Instead of meaningful sensitivity to place, this policy manifests in gestures such as using local stone at the base of the piers. These gestures suggest site specificity and local character, but "they play no part in any synthesis, they are not integrated with anything" (Augé 88) local or site specific. The generality and the standard plan cannot be hidden behind local stone façades. Rather, as Aiello and Dickinson suggest about Starbucks, "this aesthetic of [local] authenticity relies heavily on symbolic markers of difference while also remaining firmly grounded in an ethos of predictability" (316). Straying too much from the design compromises the effect of familiarity, but failing to incorporate the place into design compromises the relationship to location. And based on the small amount of local stone used to portray locality, it is clear that general familiarity is granted primacy.

Promoting familiarity over peculiarity allows members to travel without feeling as though they ever left home. Because of this, standardization encourages mobility. If the Church is the same all over the world, it is not frightening to move, or to travel; indeed, "Mormons pride themselves on feeling at home with other church members anywhere in

the world” (Bushman, *Mormonism* 36). The familiarity of buildings, no doubt, contributes to these feelings. Ward buildings as “[t]he traveler’s space may thus be the archetype of *non-place*” (Augé 70) because they allow the churchgoer, the traveler, to see without knowing. The traveler’s experience is superficial—how else could participating in religious services in a foreign language be? The act of going to church, rather than attending at a particular building, creates meaning for the traveler. In the foreign ward, the traveler is anonymous—even if hyper-individualized—to the congregation and thus is offered solitude in anonymity¹⁹ (83) and non-place.

In anonymity, the traveler sees without knowing because there is no depth to the relationships experienced. Even if the traveler speaks the language of the congregation, the relationships begin with the first meeting and end after the last. The traveler then moves on to the next congregation. The community shared between traveler and congregation is merely imagined (B. Anderson 7). Rather than forming meaningful relationships with other members of the congregation or the place, the traveler consumes the messages shared (even if s/he cannot understand them) and the sacrament. Being sites of consumption further establishes the non-place character of ward buildings (Augé viii).

I acknowledge that travelers comprise such a small percentage of total membership at any given time that it is unlikely that the traveler is the *primary* user of ward meetinghouses. However, I borrow from Martha Bradley to suggest that the traveler is integral to the construction of standard plan meetinghouses. She writes that during the 1980s: “Mormon ecclesiastical structures became the stage for the movement of large numbers of Saints *through* programs” (“Steeple” 48, my emphasis). The ward building at once facilitates movement through and acts as the ecclesiastical structure referred to.

For Bradley, it is individual members that move: they become travelers.

Viewing members as travelers requires analysis of the material building. In the Wasatch building, all entryways lead into small foyers, officially referred to as “circulation spaces” (*AEC Guidelines* 1.14). Despite the open feel of the foyers on the north and south sides of the building, which is created, in part, by tall ceilings, there is little room for individuals to pause. Rather, members are guided directly into the chapel. Furthermore, these foyers, which cannot comfortably accommodate more than a few individuals in a building that might house six hundred worshipers or more at any given time,²⁰ are likely noisy as they are used as areas to take fussy children during sacrament meeting.

Because these foyers cannot hope to accommodate even a small fraction of the total users of the building, they serve as spaces to walk through, not stay in. Furthermore, the hallways that run in a “U” shape through the building, linking the foyers (as well as the other rooms), are long and narrow (one inch over seven feet wide) with no areas to sit or congregate. They are not places for lingering, but spaces for transit. And while the chapel has permanent seats and is designed for pausing, these stays, too, are temporary, and they are defined by consumption: the silent majority listens to the speaker(s) at the pulpit. Between moments of consumption, ward members move efficiently through the building. As Bradley articulated, ward buildings are not designed for lingering, but for movement of members. Ward buildings, as non-places, then, are sites of consumption as well as circulation, or movement (Augé viii).

“Our Appearance Identifies Us”: *Place-ing* Mormon Non-Places

Asserting that ward buildings are designed for member movement suggests both the non-place character of ward buildings and role of members as travelers. As travelers, members are also strangers. And, as travelers and strangers, Mormon members congregate with imagined and anonymous communities (B. Anderson). In the case of the member in a foreign land, the imagined nature of the community that is created is clearly evident. As Georg Simmel has written,

the participants feel that what they have in common is so only because it is common to a group, a type, or mankind in general...the commonality becomes attenuated in proportion to the size of the group bearing the same characteristics. The commonality provides a basis for unifying the members, to be sure; but it does not specifically direct *these* particular persons to one another...To the extent to which the similarities assume a universal nature, the warmth of the connection based on them will acquire an element of coolness, a sense of the contingent nature of precisely *this* relation—the connecting forces have lost their specific, centripetal character. (“Stranger” 146-7)

This general commonality extends to the local traveler as well, who moves through the hallways of the local meetinghouse. If the only commonality is the shared commonality of being Mormon or attending church at a particular ward building, then, while there is a unity in the master status (Freitas et al. 325) of Mormonism, this unity does not necessarily lead to deeper or warmer relationships. Instead, there is a common strange(r)ness to the relationships: a nearness and a farness (“Stranger” 148).

Such nearness and farness of relation exists within wards housed within ward meetinghouses and helps define non-place. The nearness comes from a hyper-individualization of identity and highlights the uniqueness of each individual. While all LDS members are hyper-individualized through membership records,²¹ members are also

anonymous. Each time a member changes wards, membership records are requested. These records, like the traveler's passport, both hyper-individualize the member and provide proof of innocence (Augé 82). Yet, once they have entered into the local database, once a ward has their records, members can slip into the obscurity of the other bodies that make up the congregation.

Membership records are a good example of Simmel's concept of the stranger. According to Simmel, strangers are defined by their mobility ("Stranger" 145), by the fact that they come and go (and stay). Strangers, as outsiders, however, pose the threat of disorder (Koefoed and Simonsen 345) and must prove their innocence by proving that they belong.²² In the contemporary moment, this is done, in part, through the hyper-individualized membership number. Early Mormons, however, had another mode of proving innocence, which was simply being in Utah.

As mentioned earlier, residence in Utah proved an individual's faithfulness to the Church; it proved that they were Mormon. However, as non-Mormon settlers moved into the Mormon cultural region (Meinig 33), that initial claim to innocence lost its potency: merely being in Utah did not qualify an individual as a believer. Thus, new means of proving belonging were required.

One way to prove belonging or innocence (Augé 82), was through attending worship services (Carter 238). However, as meetings were consolidated to the current three-hour block, and with the global expansion of the Church, new means of proving belonging have been required to supplement Sunday attendance. One litmus test for belonging is appearance. And these standards of bodily appearance are a strategy of *place-ing* that at once creates a uniform sense of place²³ within the meetinghouses and

fosters their non-place character.

As described above, *place-ing* is a top down means of creating (sense of) place by filling a location with certain characteristics, practices, and/or people that reinforce the desired sense of place. For the LDS Church, that desired sense of place is a generalizable city of Zion, which does not confront members in an area away from home or in a new home with anything unfamiliar, disturbing, or jolting (Leone 38). The goal is to make any member comfortable in any building anywhere in the world.

Through *place-ing*, the LDS Church creates a building interior that is as non-specific as is its exterior. While standardized architectural plans for meetinghouse layout contribute, so do standardized policies regarding artwork and decorations. The wall colorings, the carpet, and the furniture are both generic and nondescript. The policy regarding artwork reads:

Church-approved artwork for meetinghouses is obtained through the facilities manager using the Church Facilities Artwork catalog. The facilities manager may also obtain artwork that is appropriate for meetinghouses through Church Distribution Services. Pictures and other artwork may be placed in appropriate locations in the meetinghouse...Statues, murals, and mosaics are not authorized. (*Handbook 2* 21.2.1)

In practice this policy results in meetinghouses decorated with mass-produced replicas and LDS stock images, increasing the affect of the other nondescript design elements. It creates interiors that are uniform and that hold no individual or idiosyncratic meaning or character.

The creation of non-place character through *place-ing* is further evident in the words of Church leaders. Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the quorum of twelve apostles, has remarked: “by the manner of our dress and personal grooming, we send off signals to

the world around us. Our appearance identifies us with certain manners of behavior and creates expectations in those around us” (“Standards of Dress” n.p.). He continues:

the beard and long hair are associated with protest, revolution, and rebellion against authority...Persons who wear beards or long hair, whether they desire it or not, may identify themselves with or emulate and honor...the extreme practices of those who have made slovenly appearance a badge of protest and dissent. (ibid)

Similarly, tattoos are discouraged and women are encouraged to wear only one pair of earrings and to dress modestly, “avoid[ing] short shorts and short skirts, shirts that do not cover the stomach, and clothing that does not cover the shoulders or is low-cut in the front or the back” or that is “tight, sheer, or revealing in any other manner”²⁴ (“Dress and Appearance” n.p.). Ward buildings, then, become sites where certain bodies, certain appearances, are privileged and encouraged over others. Such appearances become, like the décor, uniform. This uniform works to flatten differences among members and within ward buildings, creating a sense of non-place that is generic, familiar, and recognizable.

Furthermore, standards create clear distinctions between insiders and outsiders, which Gillian Rose argues contributes to the creation of sense of place (99). And while Mormons profess to believe that “it is what’s inside a person that counts” (Christofferson n.p.), standardizing external appearance allows Mormon leaders and practitioners to quickly judge “Who’s on the Lord’s side? Who?” for “Now is the time to show...We serve the living God, / and want his foes to know” (*Hymns* 260). By standardizing personal appearance, the Church brands its followers, creating and enforcing a distinct sense of place within its meetinghouses.

Despite the distinct sense of place that is ascribed to ward meetinghouses, however, the standards that exist within those meetinghouses also promote the non-place

character of the buildings because “the user of the non-place [the user of the ward building] is always required to prove his innocence” (Augé 82). Ward buildings function as key sites for this proof of belonging because members meet together each Sunday, dressed in the uniform. If members fail to adhere to standards in appearance, they are clearly marked as different and other. The man who fails to wear a white shirt and the woman who wears a pantsuit are marked as different and pose threats to the order of the ward building. In this way, uniformity is encouraged over individuality because uniformity proves belonging and innocence.

But innocence checks are not the only non-place characters that are exhibited through the standardization of appearance. One key aspect of non-place is the idea of individuality through conformity. The user of non-place, once belonging is proved, “becomes no more than what he does or experiences in the role of passenger, customer, or driver. Perhaps he is still weighed down by the previous day’s worries, the next day’s concerns; but he is distanced from them temporarily by the environment of the moment” (Augé 83). I might also add to Augé’s list the role of congregant. In the non-place of ward meetinghouses, individuals become anonymous in their role as worshipers.

In this adoption of communal anonymity, a sort of solipsism exists. The individual looks like others and all messages are addressed to an average member (Augé 81). Augé describes this solipsism experienced by the user of non-place:

What he is confronted with, finally, is an image of himself, but in truth it is a pretty strange image. The only face to be seen, the only voice to be heard, in the silent dialogue he holds with the landscape-text addressed to him along with others, are his own: the face and voice of a solitude all the more baffling by the fact that it echoes millions of others. The passenger through non-places retrieves his identity only at Customs, at the tollbooth, at the check-out counter.

Meanwhile, he obeys the same code as others, receives the same messages, responds to the same entreaties. The space of non-place creates neither singular identity nor relations; only solitude and similitude. (83)

Through the standardization of appearances, which engenders a standardization in behaviors, ward congregants are encouraged to look and act in similitude. They are encouraged to be one, and in such an attempt they are confronted with images of themselves, of sameness, and are left alone in solitude.

Between standardizing the appearance of both members and meetinghouses, the Church creates a distinct sense of place in its buildings. Furthermore, since, as Cresswell has argued, “place comes to have meaning through our actions in it,” which actions are “informed by the always already existing meanings of the place” (*In Place* 16), the LDS Church sets in motion a self-perpetuating cycle of (re)creation. This act of creating a place that perpetuates and reinforces the (re)creation of a specific sense of place—even if that sense of place is a sense of non-place—is what I call *place-ing*.

By setting standards of dress and appearance, the Church encourages behaviors that reinforce the desired sense of (non)place. By setting standards of appropriate appearance and behavior for bodies in standardized buildings, the Church establishes an environment where borders can easily be policed. Individuals who transgress these standards are out of place (*In Place* 7): their guilt, rather than their innocence, is proved. In this way, the socially constructed nature of place allows the building to present its “instructions for use” (Augé 77) that enforce standards of behavior and appearance in the practitioners, which, in turn, reinforces the building’s sense of (non)place.

Conclusion

Through standardizing ward meetinghouses, the LDS Church engages in *place-ing*, which is a strategy of control that creates place and sense of place through the intentional placement of desired characteristics, practices, and people within a space. Because places are socially constructed, the practice of *place-ing* creates a feedback loop in which practices recreate a place that engenders those same practices.

Furthermore, through *place-ing* the LDS Church transforms its ward meetinghouses into non-places. By creating a sense of place that reinforces borders between insiders and outsiders, the LDS Church requires its adherents to prove their innocence in order to gain admittance into the kingdom of God. Such innocence is proven by conforming to certain standards governing the individual body, by wearing “the uniform of a regiment” (*Pocket 66*).

Once admitted, individuals find solitude in anonymity: sharing only universal commonalities, they are strangers and travelers, moving through ward buildings temporarily before leaving again. While inside, the member consumes both the messages from the pulpit and the sacrament emblems.²⁵ While inside, the member waits until the three-hour block of meetings is over and then returns home. While inside, the member is “relieved of...usual determinants and becomes no more than what s/he does or experiences in the role of” ward member (Augé 83): becoming a generic brother or sister who teaches lessons or sends around the class roll. In short, in the ward building, members become their church callings, which are as non-specific to the individual as the buildings are to their locations.

Standard plan ward meetinghouses, which reinforce standards in appearance and

behavior, and which are generalizable to the point of being interchangeable, mirror the missionary plaques, which in turn, reflect the members themselves. They come and they go. They are familiarly unfamiliar. They are strangers, unknown but recognized (Koefoed and Simonsen 345).

As generically recognizable buildings, ward meetinghouses are filled with non-place character and, having no connection to the specific physical and cultural geographies of a location, are “in the world but not of the world” (Cook n.p.). They are buildings to pass through once each week in transit *to* God, not places to linger in and commune *with* God. As Martha Bradley suggests, LDS “architecture reflects an embrace of the earth rather than a preoccupation with the heavens. It has become human-centered. It is spatially the scene for the interaction of the community of Saints rather than the interaction between human beings and God” (“Steeple” 48). Furthermore, due to the *place-ing* strategies of the Church, meetinghouses are the scene for the interaction of an imaginary community: a community bound by a “common law: do as others do to be yourself” (Augé 85).

And while *place-ing* practices contribute to the non-place character of ward buildings, they also create a distinct sense of place. In the next chapter I will explore the tension between non-place and sense of place further, showing that, despite the non-place character of ward buildings, the leadership of the LDS Church has employed both spatial mythologies and *place-ing* practices to sustain a narrative that creates specific and self-perpetuating meaning and, therefore, sense of place within the ward buildings.

Notes

¹ I do not wish to suggest that National Parks are non-places. Rather, I draw from Edward Abbey's musings on the development of Arches National Park in southeastern Utah to suggest that even such iconic places as National Parks can be ascribed non-place character. Abbey suggests that increasing accessibility decreases the sense of place within the park. This transformation from place to non-place, Abbey seems to suggest, is evident in the question "How long's it take to see this place?" (44). For more, see Abbey's "*Polemic: Industrial Tourism and the National Parks*" in *Desert Solitaire*.

² Refer back to Chapter 1 and note 2 for a more complete examination of placemaking.

³ Augé views such proof of innocence as essential to the definition of non-place. While the Mormon church does not fixate on the concept of innocence, per se, it does enforce worthiness. This is evidenced in the temple recommends that are required for entrance into sacred temples and which each member is encouraged to carry. Another example is tithing settlement, which is a yearly opportunity for members to designate to the bishop whether or not they have paid a full tithe. While these settlement meetings are not required, they are strongly encouraged. And while neither of these forms of proving innocence are required for entrance into ward buildings, they are, nevertheless, means of policing standards of appropriateness and are executed within ward buildings.

⁴ In the next chapter I will explore more fully the official sense of place that exist within ward buildings.

⁵ I will discuss the need to prove belonging later on when I discuss *place-ing* and its relation to non-places.

⁶ I would be remiss not to note that it was during the correlation effort that women in the Church lost much of their autonomy. During the correlation effort, all auxiliaries (Relief Society, Primary, Youth organizations) were brought under the purview of the quorum of twelve apostles.

⁷ For a more in-depth discussion of LDS Church correlation, see Prince and Wright, Chapter 7.

⁸ As Augé suggests, a non-place is not just a standardization of architectural details, but also a standardization of practices within the non-place. One fruit of correlation was the consolidated meeting schedule, which was announced and implemented Church-wide in the spring of 1980 ("Church Consolidates" n.p.). This change meant that members would congregate during a 3-hour block of time once a week rather than having multiple meetings throughout the week, making ward buildings, for the most part, Sunday-only buildings. Such a shift helped in the transition to non-places because, as Augé writes, non-places are "measured in units of time" (84). In this case: three hours.

Furthermore, the three-hour block introduces a specific temporality to the ward buildings: it creates an itinerary. There are classes, quorum and auxiliary meetings, and sacrament meeting, each with a specific time allotment. When all is done, ward members

leave for home, vacating the building. In this way, ward buildings have become sites to move through rather than places to stay. And, as Augé suggests, not only does “non-place creates the shared identity of passengers, customers or Sunday drivers” (81), but it creates the shared identity of Sunday churchgoers and congregants.

⁹ Not only are members encouraged to read scriptural texts regularly, they are encouraged to “liken the scriptures” to their own lives and circumstances (Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 19.23-4). This idea will be expounded upon in the next chapter as I explore the spatial mythologies that contribute to sense of place.

¹⁰ Chapter 13 in *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual* recounts that members “were invited to make contributions, and many did so at great personal sacrifice” (163), which included donating china and glassware to be crushed and mixed with the plaster in order to “make the walls glisten” (164). This is just one example of the personal sacrifices that members were willing to make in order to beautify their buildings in order to please God. For more, see *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, chapter 13.

¹¹ The Church Architectural Department began providing standard plans in 1923. However, the Great Depression brought an end to the department. It was revitalized with a new name—the Church Building Committee—in 1955 (P. Anderson 475-6).

¹² The shift from unique and carefully crafted buildings toward standardized meetinghouses, which began to take effect in the 1920s but was not fully realized until the 1950s during the David O. McKay administration, helped the Church maintain functionality and cost-effectiveness while accommodating the demands of “growth and the... immediate need to house the members” (“Cloning” 23). In the face of such growth, a lack of formal meetinghouses was highlighted as an impediment to both maintaining and growing the Church (ibid. 199). This need for new chapels was compounded by a decision by J. Reuben Clark to place a moratorium on building new ward buildings the year before President McKay ascended to the presidency. Clark’s justification for the moratorium was that “[the Church has] a tendency I think to make our buildings just a little too elaborate and too ornate” (qtd. in Prince and Wright 201). Clark’s words hint at Leone’s argument that the ornate features—the artifacts and symbols of the past—may inhibit contemporary worship. Such ornate and elaborate craftsmanship, such form, may distract from the building’s function, which has dominated LDS building practices since the mid-20th century.

All of these factors contributed to McKay’s decision to rapidly develop an atrophied building program. The program accelerated so quickly, in fact, that the Church developed significant debts in the process, leading to a reinvigorated tithing policy as well as changes in how funds for ward buildings were obtained. While local congregations had previously been required to contribute thirty percent of construction costs, McKay raised the requirement to forty percent. This, he recorded in his journal, was because “[t]he people need to have higher participation in this so they will be more diligent in participating in maintaining the buildings” (qtd. in Prince and Wright 213).

McKay's argument was that increased financial responsibility in meetinghouse construction would lead to an increased sense of ownership among the congregation members. Extending this idea further, increased ownership would lead to increased participation in maintenance. This hypothesis that increased ownership leads to increased participation and increased concern is related to the idea of sense of place. Through an increased sense of ownership, individual congregants were assumed to have greater emotional investment. In other words, the buildings were assumed to mean more to individuals who contributed (more) financially: a sense of place was encouraged through ownership.

However, the encouraged sense of place in ward meetinghouses was in tension with changes to the Church building policy that led to standardization of building plans and the development of non-places. During the initial rush to provide buildings for emerging congregations throughout the world, "local architects were often used, buildings were very expensive, and often not as efficient for church needs as a standard plan building would have been" (Prince and Wright 222). As stated earlier, "church needs" were moving toward functionality. Thus, idiosyncratic buildings (that may have been expensive) inhibited the functional needs of a church that was moving increasingly toward standardization, consolidation, and correlation. For a more comprehensive overview of the Church building program during David O. McKay's presidency, see Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, 199-226.

¹³ Official policies regarding building use can be found in *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010). The introduction to building use policies states, "Church buildings...are to be used for worship, religious instruction, and other Church-related activities" (191).

¹⁴ For more on appropriate uses of ward buildings, see *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* 191-193.

¹⁵ For more on the style and theory that informs sacred architecture and design, see E.A. Sovik's *Architecture for Worship*, Richard Kieckheffer's *Theology in Stone*, James F. White's *Protestant Worship and Church Architecture*, and Anne Loveland and Otis Wheeler's *From Meetinghouse to Megachurch*.

¹⁶ The Wasatch building is a "Heritage 09T style D" building. Heritage style buildings appear in A, B, C, and D varieties (*Planning Brochure* 28).

¹⁷ According to the *United States & Canada Standard Plans Planning Brochure* used by the LDS Church, use of the Cultural Hall more than doubles seating capacity for meetings. While the Chapel (233) and the Rostrum (49) combine for 282 seats, the Cultural Hall allows for up to 379 additional seats (3).

¹⁸ This is not universal. There was a period of time when cultural halls were carpeted, likely to allow for sound dampening when used as overflow seating.

¹⁹ Any discussion of travel and travelers would be incomplete without a discussion of privilege. This is particularly pertinent to travelers within the LDS Church as certain

subject positions have the privilege to travel, while others do not. While it is not my project to discuss privileged and disenfranchised subject positions within the LDS Church, I would be remiss not to draw attention to them, since they have direct bearing on standard plan meetinghouses. I suggest that ward buildings are designed for the traveler, and I wish to clarify. General Authorities (members of the quorums of the seventy, the quorum of the twelve apostles, and the first presidency, along with other general auxiliary presidencies) are tasked with “represent[ing] the prophet to the people” (Packer qtd. in Robbins), and, therefore, travel often. It is important to note that these authorities are overwhelmingly white and male. Perhaps these administrative travelers are the audience for whom the buildings have been designed.

²⁰ The building plans suggest that the Heritage 09T stake centers can accommodate three wards of up to 300 active members each (*Planning Brochure* 3). On a typical Sunday two wards would overlap meeting times.

²¹ This hyper-individualization is apparent in membership record numbers. While all members have a membership record number, few members know their own number, let alone the number of others. Thus, the hyper-individualization that comes from the number is undermined by the ignorance to such numbers.

²² Proving belonging affected me personally as I sought permission to perform ethnographic research. While I did not need to transfer my records, I was asked to provide contact information for my local bishop. This, I was told, was so that they could make sure I was a member in good standing and did not have hostile or antagonistic purposes. In other words, they wanted proof that I wasn’t a wolf in sheep’s clothing. I needed to prove my innocence.

²³ I will explore how *place*-ing contributes to Mormon sense of place more fully in the next chapter.

²⁴ These policies governing appearance express significant gender bias. While it is not my project here, it is worth noting that the majority of “modesty” rhetoric is targeted at women (both within the LDS church in in society as a whole). For more on this see: “Modesty Rhetoric in Church Magazines” (Ziff), “Does Mormon modesty mantra reduce women to sex objects?” (Fletcher-Stack), “Moderating the Mormon Discourse on Modesty” (Finlayson-Fife).

²⁵ The bread and water of the sacrament, which represent Christ’s body and blood, respectively.

CHAPTER 3

“COME OUT OF THE WORLD INTO THE CHURCH”: SPATIAL MYTHOLOGIES, SENSE OF PLACE, AND MORMON IDENTITY IN WARD MEETINGHOUSES

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that through the practice of *place*-ing, the LDS Church has constructed a network of non-places throughout the world. While these ward buildings have non-place character, however, they are not devoid of sense of place. Rather, as I have argued, non-place is one type of sense of place. And while the LDS Church has created non-places, they also employ *place*-ing in order to establish a distinct(ly) LDS sense of place as well as a distinct(ly) LDS sense of self.

In this chapter I will expand from Henri Lefebvre's argument that place is both produced and productive (85) by applying it to sense of place. With regards to place, this social constructionist view posits that place is a container for certain social practices, rules, and mores, which are constantly in flux. Because the practices in place are changeable, place is changeable. An example of this changeability of place is seen in the PARKing day movement (Endres, Senda-Cook, and Cozen 121-124). While parking stalls have been ascribed certain meaning (places to park vehicles), which then prescribes certain behaviors (parking vehicles), the meaning can be reinterpreted based on the behaviors in place, such as transforming a parking stall into a yoga class, a mini-golf

course, or a library (*Inhabit* n.p.). Meanings, then, are open to contestation, and places are in reciprocal relationships with the individuals and groups who use them.

As a means of production, place informs identity and produces meaning(s) and set(s) of expectations (Cresswell, *In Place* 3) at both the individual and the communal levels because the meanings held in place are both personal and shared. In both cases, these meanings are understood through sense of place, which Edward Relph argues is “an innate faculty, possessed in some degree by everyone, that connects us to the world” (208). Through sense of place, individuals and groups interpret the meanings of the places they occupy and form identities, in part, based on those meanings. In this way, sense of place creates identities based upon the meanings it offers. Sense of place can also be altered by the identities that ascribe meaning(s) to place. Furthermore, architectural structures can contribute to the creation of both sense of place and identity (Adebayo, et al. 170) because they may contain histories and hopes (173) as well as symbologies and traditions (171), and because the built environment is where humans spend much of their time. Building from this idea, I employ sense of place in order to further interrogate the built environment, specifically the ward meetinghouses, of the LDS Church, and its contribution to administrative *place*-ing as well identity formation and placemaking at both the individual and the community levels.

Gillian Rose suggests that sense of place is a complicated phrase with a multitude of meanings. While I acknowledge the complexity of the phrase, I wish to combine, at the risk of simplification, two aspects that Rose explores: sense of place in relation both to structures of power and to the politics of identity. In her discussion Rose argues that sense of place is “part of our cultural interpretation of the world around us,” which

includes an awareness of difference(s) that inform feelings of belonging and not-belonging (99). Sense of place, she continues, can be used to create insiders and outsiders by creating boundaries founded on difference, which at once exposes structures of power and informs identity. Through this differentiation, certain senses of place are granted primacy over others, and outsiders are viewed as an “Other” against whom insiders measure their identities (and power). Through the creation of an “Other,” insiders can regulate the meaning of a place (103), reinforcing the “appropriate” sense of place.

Because meanings can be regulated, ward buildings, as places where the righteous may gather, become, as a forgotten Mormon author suggests, “the building blocks of Mormon faith” (qtd. in Starrs 330) and are used to create shared identity through practices in them. Ward buildings serve as building blocks of faith because they are regularly used as sites of spiritual and social congregation. During the three-hour block of meetings each Sunday, ward members worship God, learn from historical and contemporary Church leaders and texts, and participate in the sacred ritual ordinance of the sacrament. As mentioned earlier, however, not all uses of the building are of a spiritual nature. Perhaps because of this multiplicity of uses, perhaps in spite of it, Church leadership has attempted to establish a specific meaning for ward meetinghouses. As D. Todd Christofferson, a member of the quorum of twelve apostles, has said, “meetinghouses are dedicated to the Lord as sacred space” (n.p.). Thus, the official position presented by the Church is that ward buildings are sacred sites of worship—the “House of God” (“Steeple” 40)—and, as such, their sense(s) of place are regulated accordingly.

Because sense of place is at once creative and created, designating or encouraging

a particular sense of place has implications for the users of a specific place. More specifically, prescribing a sense of place can be a means of prescribing particular manifestations of meanings within individuals. In other words, particular senses of place can encourage the practice of particular identities. This creativity, however, works both ways. Just as sense of place can lead to certain manifestations of individual identity, individuals can create sense of place after their own image (Harvey 4), resulting in resistance to the dominant sense of place. And while I acknowledge that this creativity is bidirectional, at this point, I focus on the role that (sense of) place has in identity formation. In order to understand the role that ward meetinghouses have in identity formation, then, I will first explore the spatial mythologies that contribute to how the LDS Church thinks about identity in spatial terms. I will draw on scriptural and other significant texts, applying close readings and textual analysis to such texts in order to provide evidence for my argument that the LDS Church administration employs spatial mythologies in order to create a distinct LDS sense of place and a desired LDS identity.

After discussing spatial mythologies, I will return to the concept of *place-ing* and suggest that the formation and maintenance of the created identities in the LDS Church depend upon the notion of appropriateness and are contingent upon Church endorsed mythologies. As mentioned in the previous chapter, through clearly defined beliefs and policies on what is and is not appropriate, standards arise in order to separate insiders from outsiders. These standards are evidenced in the standard-plan architectural designs of contemporary ward meetinghouses and reflect the spatial mythologies of Mormon belief. Following the argument from the previous chapter, I continue to posit that such standardization causes ward meetinghouses to undergo a transformation from place to

non-place (Augé viii). This, argument, however, is complicated by the simultaneous creation of a distinct(ly) LDS sense of place. In this chapter, then, I discuss more fully the sense of place/non-place dialectic and the use of *place*-ing in the construction of both. Furthermore, I suggest that the standardization of the (non)places of Mormon meetinghouses renders the individuals that worship within them replaceable, interchangeable, and disposable, while simultaneously creating a powerful shared identity throughout the Church. I apply textual analysis of historical and contemporary speeches and policies in order to support my claims.

Mormon Spatial Mythologies and Identity

In Mormon beliefs there are many places of importance. The desert on the borders of the Red Sea is where the Israelites came to know God after fleeing Egypt. Bethlehem is the place where Jesus Christ was born. The Sacred Grove in Palmyra, New York is the site of the first vision, where the faith's founder, Joseph Smith, claims to have seen God the Father and Jesus Christ. And, according to Brigham Young, "[the Salt Lake Valley] is the right place" (qtd. in Faust 1). These places and their meanings are recounted in Mormon mythology using spatial language. This is evidenced in the sacred scriptural texts (such as the Book of Mormon), in the historical origins of the Church, and in other religious and historical texts that are significant to Mormon practitioners. As a dominant framework for interpreting the world, such spatiality has potential to affect contemporary beliefs and practices, especially in regards to the creation of personal and shared cultural identities.

For the contemporary LDS Church, the idea of place informs broad geographic regions or areas, but more specifically, and importantly, is encapsulated within the idea of

the built environment. And while temples, tabernacles, and ward meetinghouses are seen as places of worship in which the Saints may come to know God, dominant spatial mythologies are also evidenced in Church administrative policies in which individual members are compartmentalized into wards (the basic religious congregations of the Church) and stakes (conglomerates of wards) based on spatial distribution.

In his paper “The Mormon Ward: Congregation or Community?” Douglas Alder describes the ward as an essentially “religious unit” (72) “where saints [Mormon practitioners] gather for reinforcement in their combat against secularism” (65): “a set of human relationships, [which is] not only an organization, or a building, or a calendar of activities, or a ream of reports. It is people” (77) in a particular location. Because a ward is a group of people that create meaningful relationships in a geographically defined space, a ward building is a place that “gather[s] experiences and histories...languages and thoughts” (Casey 24) and collects meaning (Cresswell, *Place* 7). Part of the meaning arises from what Alder refers to as the “combat against secularism” (65), which is part of the spatial mythology of the LDS Church.

Benedict Anderson wrote that “all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined” (B. Anderson 6), and the Mormon congregation is no exception. According to the official mythology set forth in biblical doctrine, these congregations, which are made up of a few hundred individuals, are “one body...and every one members one of another” (*King James Bible*, Romans 12.5). They are unified in their “partak[ing] of that one bread” (1 Cor. 10.17), which is Jesus Christ. Beyond this, they are unified by a shared set of spatial mythologies that inform their sense of place and which differentiate between those *in* the Church and those

out of the Church.

Such distinctions between *inside* and *outside*, or who *we are* as opposed to who *we are not*, are important in the creation of identity (Freitas et al. 323). In his book *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*, Tim Cresswell argues that place is an important factor in determining who/what belongs and who/what does not. This, he argues, is because “places are active forces in the reproduction of norms—in the definition of appropriate practices” (16). Place, both physical and mythological, serves to create community through shared conceptions of appropriateness, which engender a sense of place. In Mormon mythology, an official, or approved, conception of sense of place is presented through sacred texts such as the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon recounts the (hi)story of two primary and spatially distinct groups of people—the Nephites and the Lamanites—thus, contributing to a spatial mythology within the religion. While the Nephites and Lamanites are descended from the same progenitor (Lehi), for the majority of the story, the Nephites are described as the righteous and chosen people of God while the Lamanites are depicted as wicked and cursed by God. Because of these differences, Nephi, the eponymous leader of the Nephites, leads his followers through the wilderness and away from his hostile brothers (Laman—after whom the Lamanites are called—and Lemuel) (Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 5.5-7). Thus, the Nephites and the Lamanites became spatially distinct peoples. Throughout most of the account in the Book of Mormon, the relationship between the Nephites and the Lamanites remains antagonistic and often results in violent conflict. In response to this conflict, the Nephites strive to fortify their cities against Lamanite attacks (ibid, Alma 49.13).

Such stories of attack and fortification have a spatial element. While the battles and wars are based on cultural differences, these differences are due, in part, to spatial distinctions and differences in sense of place. At various points within the (hi)story recounted in the Book of Mormon, the Nephites are described as industrious and agricultural, “till[ing] the land, and rais[ing] all manner of grain, and of fruit, and flocks of herds, and flocks of all manner of cattle of every kind, and goats, and wild goats, and also many horses” (ibid. Enos 1:21). Nephite places, then, are fertile, productive, and permanent. As Edward Relph argues, “[sense of p]lace in ethnic nationalism is synonymous with the culture into which one has been born” (223). Thus, Nephite sense of place was equated to the Nephite culture of religious civility, industry, and self-reliance. On the other hand, the Lamanites¹

were led by their evil nature that they became wild, and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people, full of idolatry and filthiness; feeding upon beasts of prey; dwelling in tents, and wandering about in the wilderness with a short skin girdle about their loins and their heads shaven...And many of them did eat nothing save it was raw meat. (ibid. Enos 1.20)

Lamanite places, as described here, were wild, uncivil, and dangerous; their places were less permanent than were the Nephite places. These differences in how place was conceived (or perceived), which derived, in part, from perceived differences in culture (Rose 99), also had a spatial component.² In this way, the Nephite sense of place, which the Nephites associated with their lands and cultural practices, justified the protection of place from outsiders.

Such a reading is potentially problematic given that Mormon practitioners have been encouraged to read themselves into scriptural stories (Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi

19.23-4; Pearson n.p.) and that they believe that the Book of Mormon is “the most correct of any book on earth” (Book of Mormon vii) and is the word of God (Pearl of Great Price, “Articles of Faith” 1.8). Following this admonition to read themselves into the stories, Mormons are encouraged to read themselves as the Nephites, the chosen of God, and the righteous, who must protect their places of (cultural) meaning and, therefore, their *sense of place* from the invading “Other.” This sentiment is what Relph calls a “poisoned sense of place” that “carries within itself a blindness and a tendency to become a platform for ethnic national supremacy and xenophobia” (222). While the Nephite sense of place manifests itself through ideas of ethnic supremacy, contemporary LDS practitioners do not necessarily see insiders and outsiders along ethnic or racial lines.³ However, there are other criteria upon which the terms insider and outsider rest, and which contribute to, and are influenced by, the sense of place promoted by the Church.

Reading the ward building as the Nephite city has also been bolstered by the lived experience of the early (nineteenth century) Latter-day Saints. From the outset the LDS Church experienced tensions with the surrounding communities. These tensions, in which LDS practitioners were violently persecuted, caused them to flee west—into the wilderness,⁴ eventually settling in the Great Salt Lake Valley. In the Great Basin, the Mormons were able to establish what geographer D.W. Meinig has called the “Mormon Cultural Region” (33) and begin fortifying this region, this (“right”) place, against the ever-present threat of the “Other.” As the Mormon Cultural Region was perceived as being increasingly infiltrated by secular non-Mormons, however, its sense of place began to lose some of its potency, and the city of Zion—the city of God (“Zion” n.p.)—that was sought had to be adjusted. This adjustment caused the “Mormon village [to] g[i]ve way

to...the ward” (Alder 65). Thus, the ward building became the fortified city of scripture, a secure place that clearly defined the inside from the outside (Rose 99), the righteous from the wicked, the Zion of the righteous from Babylon, the city of sin (Doctrine and Covenants, 133.14). Ward buildings, then, became places of refuge where “members try to establish a small Zion amid secular surroundings” (Alder 75). In the ward building the righteous and chosen of God were protected from the cursed secularity and pride of the world (Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 11.36). In the ward building, Mormon practitioners could find the sense of place that had defined both the traditional Mormon village (Starrs 340) and the Nephite city. Like both the Mormon village and the Nephite city, the ward building established spatially distinct locations of cultural potency that underscored the cultural distinctions between saints and sinners.

Understanding the Mormon spatial mythologies, both scriptural and historical, is critical to understanding Mormon sense(s) of place, which (in)form general LDS beliefs and contribute to contemporary practices at the ward level. While ward buildings have been created as sites of congregation and worship, they are more than that. Through the official communications from the Church, including talks at semiannual general conferences of the Church and the standard works of scripture, which are interpolated into the spatial mythologies underwriting Mormon faith, these buildings are portrayed, much like the fortified Nephite cities read about in sacred texts, as refuges in a troubled world. Ward buildings are the officially sanctioned places where the “the pure in heart” (Doctrine and Covenants 97.21) meet; they are outcroppings of Zion.

Because of the significance, which interpolates spatial mythology into the material world of Mormondom, practitioners are called to congregate often, as evidenced

in the refrains of hymns sung during worship services:

Israel! Israel, God is calling,
 Calling thee from lands of woe.
 Babylon the great is falling;
 God shall all her tow'rs o'erthrow.
 Come to Zion, come to Zion
 Ere his floods of anger flow.
 Come to Zion, come to Zion
 Ere his floods of anger flow.

 Israel! Israel! Canst thou linger
 Still in error's gloomy ways?
 Mark how judgment's pointing finger
 Justifies no vain delays.
 Come to Zion, come to Zion!
 Zion's walls shall ring with praise.
 Come to Zion, come to Zion!
 Zion's walls shall ring with praise. (*Hymns 7*)

The Israel addressed in this hymn is not the contemporary nation state, nor is it the Israel of the Old Testament. Rather, it is those who gather together within the walls of the ward building: it is faithful Mormon members. And while in this hymn can be heard the call to gather, in these verses gathering together is only part of the charge. Beyond gathering, Mormon practitioners are charged to flee from Babylon (or the world of sin) before it is destroyed. In singing this hymn, worshippers are reminded that they (Israel) are a chosen people of God and that through gathering together, they will be saved. Singing hymns such as this one works to unify members (Lloyd n.p.), contributes to the spatial mythologies found in other sacred texts, and reinforces the spatial mythologies that inform the concepts of both righteousness and wickedness. Thus, the communal singing of such hymns, which act to both sacralize the meetinghouse and spatialize that sacredness, invites worshipers to adopt a distinct sense of place within the ward building and, according to Michael Moody, a former chairman of the general Church Music

Committee, “help[s] them to figuratively ‘come in from the outside world’” (qtd. in Lloyd n.p.). Through the singing of hymns, then, ward members simultaneously enact a figurative flight from Babylon and create the place to which they ought to gather: Zion.

This proposed sense of place has clear scriptural referents as well. In “Genesis” the prophet Jacob’s name is changed by God to Israel (Genesis 32.28), and his posterity are a blessed people. The same blessed children of Israel follow the prophet Moses through a parted red sea to escape bondage and achieve salvation while the pursuing Egyptians are drowned (Exodus 14.16-30). Architectural historian Thomas Carter suggests that early Latter-day Saints viewed their own trek to the Great Basin as a “‘recapitulation’ of the Exodus story, a time of trial and redemption” (238): a flight from oppressive persecution to a promised land of salvation. Furthermore, in Mormon scripture the city of Babylon is a city of captivity doomed to destruction (Jeremiah 50; D&C 16.1, 64.24). Thus, Israel and Babylon act as two opposing poles: salvation and destruction, righteousness and wickedness. The contemporary ward meetinghouse and congregation can be interpreted as renewed embodiments of the Israel myth.

Because Babylon will be destroyed, according to Mormon scriptural texts, it becomes requisite to leave Babylon and gather in Zion (*Hymns* 319). This call to gather becomes as physical and geographical as it is spiritual. And the ward building serves as the location: it becomes the “mountain[] of Ephraim” wherein the saints dwell (ibid). This conflation of Zion and ward building allows for the creation of what Ethan Yorgason calls “[m]oral geographies,” which are “spaces and places created by the powerful to banish, exclude or reform those who transgress socially dominant codes of right and wrong” (450) and both create and “preserve symbolic boundaries between

insiders and outsiders” (456). In this way ward buildings become microregions that “spatially focus continuing practices by Mormons through which they [seek] to perpetuate their identity” (462) both as individuals and as a community.

As Rose has argued, sense of place—and, therefore, identity—can be formed in the space of tension between belonging and not-belonging (89, 92). The ward meetinghouse exploits such spaces by creating clearly defined insiders and outsiders: those who belong and those who do not. Because Mormons are encouraged to read themselves into their governing spatial mythologies, the Church fosters a powerful sense of place regarding the ward meetinghouses in which members worship; and these senses of place, founded on ideas of belonging and not-belonging, are proposed by the Church as central to the identities of the Mormon faithful. As Boyd K. Packer, former president of the quorum of twelve apostles, said in a 2006 Church General Conference, “Those who come out of the world into the Church, keep the commandments, honor the priesthood, and enter into activity have found the refuge” (Packer n.p.). Packer’s language here suggests spiritual, but also physical, movement: *into* the Church, *into* activity, *into* ward buildings, which stand in as symbols for both the Church as a whole and for activity within the Church. In such sense of place, the meetinghouse becomes a stand-in for Zion, for Israel, for the kingdom of God on the Earth (Doctrine and Covenants, “Explanatory Introduction” v). By association, then, the Latter-day Saints who occupy these buildings are encouraged to identify as the righteous, the children of God, and the pure, for “no unclean thing can enter into the kingdom of God” (Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 15.1). Such identities, however, must be actively maintained (Freitas et al. 324), which requires adopting social mores and standards of appropriateness.

The spatial mythologies explored here contribute to a distinct(ly Mormon) sense of place that the LDS Church works to establish in its meetinghouses and encourages members to adopt. Such active promotion of a specific sense of place is a means of *place-ing*. As with other places and other senses of place, the meanings ascribed into the ward meetinghouses by Church administrators and leadership prescribe behaviors within those meetinghouses. Just as the example of parking stalls suggests, established meanings in place (or sense of place) can be extremely powerful, and can be difficult (though not impossible) to overcome. Because (sense of) place is both product and productive, however, ascribing meaning to place is not enough to maintain or perpetuate sense of place. Because of this, encouraging a distinct sense of place is not, by itself, *place-ing*; rather, it is a facet of *place-ing* that is made more complete through its complementary process of prescribing standards of behavioral appropriateness in place. It is these standards of behavior in place, this other facet of *place-ing*, that I will explore next.

Fortifying the City: Appropriateness, Standards, and Implications

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, like most religions, is structured around a framework of rules and commandments. These commandments serve to maintain certain standards of moral conduct among Church members. They also serve as borders, helping indicate what the Church is and is not. Through such borders the Church gains its identity; it marks itself as different from other religions and organizations. And while this difference is certainly ideologically based, it is also place based. As Tim Cresswell has argued, “expectations about behavior *in place* are important in the construction, maintenance, and evolution of ideological values” (*In Place* 4, my emphasis). And, as J.B. Thompson suggests, ideologies are “meaning[s] in the service of

power” (qtd. in Cresswell, *In Place* 14). Endorsing spatial mythologies and promoting a distinct sense of place work in combination with these expectations *in place* to allow the Church to establish a dominant ideology *of place*. Mormon beliefs, then, have a spatial component. Informed by spatial mythologies, Mormon beliefs regarding appropriateness (in appearance, in speech, in behavior) present a set of meanings and practices to Mormon practitioners. And that meaning serves to elevate righteousness (read: appropriateness) over wickedness. Because of this, a righteous peculiarity—difference from the “world”—is encouraged within the LDS Church (Oaks, “Followers” n.p.).

This predilection for difference contributes to the Church’s movement down “a path of architectural and cultural otherness” (Carter 213), which has resulted in the standardization of ward meetinghouses that offer a distinct presentation of Mormonism with “a style of [its] own” (Kimball n.p.). As exhibited earlier, while early Mormon meetinghouses were distinct and idiosyncratic, buildings designed and constructed after the 1920s became conventional (Starrs 333), and in the contemporary moment, new meetinghouses follow a standard plan in which “[c]onsistency and pattern are the rule” (335). Movement toward consistency and pattern in architecture mirrors the fortification of Nephite cities in the Book of Mormon. In the book of “Alma”, an army of Lamanites wages war against the Nephites. Before the war commences, however, the Nephites, following their leader Moroni, “erected small forts, or places of resort; throwing up banks of earth round about to enclose [their] armies, and also building walls of stone to encircle them about” (Book of Mormon, Alma 48.8). In these preparations, all cities, all places of refuge, were standardized so that the Nephites could withstand the armies of the Lamanites, regardless of where they would attack (ibid. Alma 49.13). Similarly, the

standardization of ward meetinghouses created a uniform line of defense around the moral geographies of Mormon mythology.

Defense and safety are concepts that form a key part of the dominant spatial mythologies of the LDS religion. While the Nephites of scripture were required to fortify cities from ever-present dangers, the early Saints were violently driven from place to place, being repeatedly forced to leave their homes under threat of death. Their founding prophet, Joseph Smith, Jr., was martyred while imprisoned on spurious charges. Such a history of violence has led to a circling of the wagons, a turning toward the center for safety. Even after migrating across the country and settling in Utah, the early Mormon settlers remained highly insular, creating a Mormon cultural region throughout the western United States (Yorgason). This region, viewed as Zion, became more than just a physical haven away from abuses: it became a symbolic heaven on earth and “[m]ovement away from the region symbolized abandonment of...faith” (Yorgason 457). Yorgason points out that early Mormon literature and theater often conflated leaving Utah with leaving the Church (456-7). Because the Mormon cultural region symbolized Zion and because the Zion-Babylon dichotomy was such a strongly held belief, anything exterior to Zion was always-already a Babylon of spiritual danger.

The alterity that this Zion-Babylon dichotomy fostered has led, in many ways, to a culture of fear among Mormons, which is expressed over the pulpit and in print media as a fear of falling away from the Church (Perry n.p.; Oaks, “Deceived” n.p.). Because the dichotomy is so distinct, the border between Zion and Babylon is a steep edge, an edge down which it is easy to slip but difficult to climb again. Because it is so easy to fall and so difficult to return, it is safest to stay central, which means to conform to dominant

cultural practices. In order to encourage this centrality, leaders, like Joseph Fielding Smith, have taught that “[Babylon] is coming to its end... The day will come when we will not have this world. It will be changed. We will get a better world. We will get one that is righteous” (*Joseph Fielding Smith* 248). Thus, if the Saints remain faithful, they will get their reward “[w]hile they who reject this glad message / Shall never such happiness know” (*Hymns* 19). In order to ensure the happiness of the righteous, Zion must be created and maintained.

Evident in the language of leaders like Joseph Fielding Smith is an “us/them” dichotomy. For Smith (and others), not *all* people will receive a better world. Rather, those who belong to the LDS Church will receive the reward, while those who do not will come to an end with Babylon. Furthermore, it is not *all* members of the Church, but those who are active and not straddling or toeing the line between Zion and Babylon, who will receive the reward (Stone; Gibbons); in other words, those who regularly enter into the Zion of ward meetinghouses are those who will be saved.⁵ Thus, the call from the pulpit is always to stay far away from that which is unclean (Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 10.21, 15.34; Alma 7.21, 11.37, 40.26), to give up the “summer cottage in Babylon” (Gibbons), and to “stay by the tree” (Pearson n.p.). In other words, members are asked to be seen at the ward building. In order to claim a position in the kingdom of God, movement toward the center is vital. Beyond this movement, members are also urged to “put on the full armor of God” (Eph. 6.11-18), which offers protection from the contaminating world.

In the Book of Mormon, the Nephite cities needed to be fortified because they contained Nephites. What was housed inside the city was suggestive of what was needed outside. This concept has been rephrased by contemporary leaders of the LDS Church: “I

believe that it is what's inside a person that truly counts, but that's what worries me. [Appearance] is a message about what is inside a person" (Christofferson n.p.). Just as the Lamanites (and travelling Nephites) could easily recognize a fortified city as a Nephite city, so the standard plan of contemporary LDS meetinghouses is a clear indicator of the people that occupy those buildings. I argued in the previous chapter that standards of appearance and behavior are means of proving innocence, or belonging, within ward buildings, which contributes to the non-place character of the meetinghouses. In this chapter, I wish to complicate this argument slightly by suggesting that such standards also foster a distinct sense of place. In doing so, however, I will show that non-place is a sense of place.

If, as Christofferson asserts, what is outside reflects what is inside, then standardized ward meetinghouses suggest standardized congregations and individuals. While I will interrogate this standardization of individuals more completely in Chapter 4, I wish to suggest that the standardization of individuals is presented as desirable by LDS leaders. Furthermore, such efforts to standardize individuals are a means of *place*-ing.

In order to create a uniform body of people, rules must be established to govern behaviors and, more specifically, bodies. The justification for governing the body is found in the belief that bodies are temples (1 Cor. 3.16, 6.19; Packer n.p.). In this metaphor, bodies become places: sites where the spirit of God may visit. Through the use of such a spatial metaphor, the body is interpolated directly into the spatial mythologies of Mormondom. Viewed as a temple, the corporeal body of LDS practitioners must remain undefiled by immodest clothing,⁶ tattoos, and piercings (Packer n.p., Hinckley n.p.). Furthermore, as a temple, as a sacred place, the body, like the Nephite city and the

contemporary ward meetinghouse, must be identifiable as such. Standards of dress and grooming allow individuals to be quickly, albeit superficially, identified as pure or impure. As argued in the previous chapter, this ease of identifying the people of Zion from the people of Babylon serves as a means of proving innocence (read: belonging), thus enhancing the non-place character of ward meetinghouses. Such standardization of appearance has another use, however, which is in creating a distinct(ly Mormon) sense of place.

Because standards are taught regularly over the pulpit, in the classroom, and in the home via printed materials distributed by the Church, the Church creates ward buildings that are meant for certain bodies. Individuals who do not meet the appearance standards are meant to feel out of place in these highly standardized locations. These standards create certain meanings within the buildings because they encourage certain behaviors. And, just like with parking stalls, these meanings are reified through the behaviors that exist within them.

Encouraged standards of behavior work with the standardized building design to increase the zionic sense of place that the Church promotes. Such standardization serves as a visual expression of an (imagined) inward unity. One of the crowning moments of the Book of Mormon is Jesus Christ's appearance to the descendants of Lehi (Book of Mormon 3 Ne 11-28). After Christ's visitation, the people in the land "had all things common among them; therefore [*sic*] there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift" (ibid. 4 Nephi 1.3). The account also suggests that there were no longer any contentions (ibid. 4 Nephi 1.13, 15). Nor were there any "Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in one, the

children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God. And how blessed were they!” (ibid. 4 Nephi 1.17-18). This account suggests that the blessing of unity is accomplished through the erasure of difference. This erasure of difference, however, privileges certain groups. In the case of the Book of Mormon, it is important that there are no longer any Lamanites, because the Lamanites were the unrighteous. Then, because there was no longer an “other”, there was no need to have further distinctions (“-ites”). Furthermore, the assertion that there were no longer any contentions, which is stated twice, suggests a uniformity of belief and opinion. Without the unrighteous Lamanites, without an “other”, there could only exist unity: of thought, of belief, of appearance.

This concept of a unified place with no contention and no distinctions between peoples is reminiscent of the presecularized Great Basin Mormon village and the idea that simply existing in place was emblematic of faith and belief. Furthermore, this concept of a unified people in place has a visual component. In the Book of Mormon, the Nephites and the Lamanites were *visually* distinct (Book of Mormon 2 Nephi 5.21). Thus, with the erasure of the Lamanites from the postvisitation population, there was a *visual* uniformity that contributed to the perceived uniformity in thought.⁷ Thus, through the use of *visual* standards (dress, appearance, building design) the Church promotes the perception of unified thought and belief. As Christofferson has argued on behalf of the LDS Church, visual expression is a reflection of internal belief (n.p.).

The conflation of visual expression and belief is evident at both the local and the global scale. The spatial myth of unity through visual identity works to unite a ward congregation, but it also serves to promote a unity across the globe. Mormons across the globe can see ward buildings and feel a sense of belonging because the visual and spatial

rhetoric (Bradley, “Cloning” 23; Augé 87) is the same in all ward meetinghouses.

Members, then, can see in ward buildings sites of refuge in an otherwise troubled and chaotic world.

This sense of peace that comes from ward meetinghouses is apparent in contemporary LDS artist Justin Wheatley’s painting titled *Chaos & Calm* (Figure 4). The painting depicts the disorderly rooftops of suburban houses, which represent the chaos of the world. A white steeple rises above the chaos of the rooftops and into the pale blue of the sky. Extending vertically from the steeple to the top of the painting is a straight line, that serves as a visual representation of the line of communication between God and humanity. The placement of the line and the steeple communicates the authority (both priesthood and revelation) that LDS Church members believe is unique to them. It is this authority that works to create a “house of order” (Doctrine and Covenants 132.8, 88.119, 109.8) amidst the chaos of houses. Furthermore, it is important to note that meetinghouses depicted follows the contemporary standard plan design of LDS meetinghouses. Thus, it is the contemporary ward meetinghouse that offers calm amidst the chaos of everyday life.

Because the Church uses only two standard plans, (*Meetinghouse Standard Plans* n.p.), regardless of geographical and cultural contexts surrounding a building site, the meetinghouse has a standard look (Seymour 1), resulting in a landscape dotted with generic buildings. These generic (albeit distinctly Mormon) buildings work in concert with a shared spatial mythology to create a uniform sense of place in such buildings. In light of Gillian Rose’s argument that “the meanings given to a place may be so strong that they become a central part of the identity of the people experiencing them” (88),



Figure 4. *Chaos & Calm*. Reprinted with permission from Justin Wheatley.

then, LDS ward meetinghouses may contribute to the identity of the practitioners who worship within them. And, based upon the physical and aesthetic attributes of these buildings, the identity that is offered to members through these places is an identity of uniformity and generality, which fosters a sense of unity in place.

These standardized meetinghouses are intentionally neutral, meaning that they have not been personalized by the individuals that worship in them (Leone 38). This neutrality is useful in a rapidly growing Church because it allows the LDS Church,

through its buildings, to create a “self-contained, coherent universe of experience” (B. Anderson 121) amongst its members. This allows for “less confusion of identities [for newcomers] and easier transference of emotions from one ward chapel to the next” (Leone 38). There is less confusion of identities because, like Nephite cities, ward meetinghouses have all been fortified against the enemy. Thus, in these places, identity can be formed through emplaced experience of what it is *not*: because an individual is located in a sacred place, the individual is protected from the enemy’s attacks and, therefore, the individual is *not* the enemy (secularization, wickedness, Lamanite, etc.), but a child of God (a Nephite, a member of the Church, etc.) and, therefore, righteous. Such an experience fosters uniformity because the experience is not site-specific, but general: it is not *a* ward building that offers this identity, but *all* ward buildings. Regardless of the building an individual attends, the sense of place and the emplaced experience is designed to be uniform.

But this uniformity is also encouraged through embodied practices in place. In *Imagined Communities* Benedict Anderson discusses the creation of nationalism and national identity. One example he offers in order to substantiate his argument is the case of colonial Indonesia. Anderson argues that one way in which the Dutch created a national Indonesian identity was through the standardization of the school system. He writes that because of this standardization, Indonesian individuals “knew that from wherever they had come they still had read the same books and done the same sums” (122). Thus, they shared a common understanding of the world, despite their differences, based on embodied practices at school. Because of these shared practices, they became a unified nation state. Similarly, the LDS Church has sought a unified community of

Saints, which is encouraged through standardization of building design and aesthetics⁸ as well as standardization of individual dress and appearance. The creation of such standards is an aspect of *place*-ing that works with the spatial mythologies of the LDS Church to encourage a distinct sense of place within the ward building. Through the erasure of easily perceived differences in its members, in combination with easily perceived differences between its ward meetinghouses and other buildings, the LDS church has encouraged a uniform communal identity through creating a distinct(ly Mormon) sense of place, which is accomplished through the practice of *place*-ing.

Staying by the Tree: Centrality, Sense of Place, and Identity

In a system that privileges group identity over individual identity, the creation of a composite or average member is not surprising. However unsurprising it is, though, it is not without implications. Systems of averages are defined by a center. In the *Book of Mormon*, the patriarch Lehi has a vision in which he sees the tree of life. In his vision, this tree stands in opposition to a “great and spacious building” (Book of Mormon 1 Nephi 8.26), which represents the pride and sin of the secular world (ibid. 11.36). This mythology, much like the mythologies of Zion and Babylon and Nephites and Lamanites, is spatial and presents a dichotomy between righteousness and wickedness. Thus, the tree of life metonymically represents righteousness. Mormon believers are, therefore, taught to “stay by the tree” (Pearson n.p.), to remain at the center, in order to avoid being spotted by sin. Furthermore, “that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer often and offer up they sacraments upon my holy day” (Doctrine and Covenants 59.9). In other words, members remain pure by going to meetinghouses that represent the purity of Zion.

Zion, the tree, the ward meetinghouse, then, represent both a spatial and a symbolic center where members should stay because the center has been fortified and made safe, and because the borders of spatial mythology must be enforced, this compositeness leads to an increased obsession with centrality. By staying central, however, individual members become less discrete, more average, and the range of individuality contracts. This contraction causes the center to become more narrowly defined. And while this is not necessarily the doctrinal stance preached over the pulpit, the ward meetinghouses and the sense of place they engender through *place-ing* do little (if anything) to oppose this cultural centrality. Intentionally blank buildings, created through *place-ing*, can be inscribed with fundamentalism as centrally-trending social practices reproduce meetinghouse meanings that further engender increased centrality. Thus, unintentionally or not, the LDS Church has, through *place-ing* its building, fostered a fundamentalist-trending mediocrity. While excellence and individual agency are preached over the pulpit (see Zeballos, Pearson), the physical pulpit and the other design elements in the meetinghouses, propose mediocrity.

This center-trending mediocrity may contribute to a general apathy of spirit in the individual, which Georg Simmel terms the “blasé” (“Metropolis” 51). While Simmel argues that the blasé attitude arrives as a result of “[a] life in boundless pursuit of pleasures...because it agitates the nerves to their strongest reactivity for such a long time that they finally cease to react at all” (51), I wish to suggest that the blasé can also result from the opposite: lack of stimulation and agitation of the nerves to the point that the nerves cease to react at all due to atrophy. To slightly alter Simmel’s argument, through this atrophy of nerves, of spirit, of individuality, “the meaning and differing values of

[people], and thereby the [people] themselves, are experienced as insubstantial. They appear to the blasé person in an evenly flat and gray tone; no one [person] deserves preference over any other” (52). In short, all individuals, like the buildings they worship in, become interchangeable.

Like the sacred spaces of worship, individual identities become mass-produced “temples” that contribute to a larger cultural landscape. Martha Sonntag Bradley, in arguing against the standardization of ward meetinghouses in 1981 suggested that

Within a church that willingly arbitrates on matters of the arts, choosing, regulating and directing artistic tastes and style, albeit in the name of efficiency, economy and morality, what remains but the obliteration of creative thought? With each effort, the exercise of a creative idea is rendered less and less useful; it is circumscribed to a narrower range until it is finally eliminated. (“Cloning” 30)

For Bradley one of the great dangers of standardization is the loss of creative and independent thought. In stifling creative and independent thought, Bradley continues, the Church “forc[es] out diversity and character” (31), accepting only those who meet standards of appropriateness. A similar argument can be found in David Harvey’s *Rebel Cities* and applies here. In his discussion of city (re)appropriation, Harvey points out the danger in trying to “brand” a city: “[t]he successful branding of a city may require the expulsion or eradication of everyone or everything else that does not fit the brand” (108). In creating a distinctive (collective) identity, through *place*-ing standardized meetinghouses, the LDS Church may be required to cast out those who do not fit or meet the standard. This is evident in a recent story reported in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, which describes how a Sunday School teacher was removed from his position for discussing racist motivations for historical Church policies that, while officially acknowledged by

the Church and posted on their official website,⁹ were deemed (culturally) inappropriate (Fletcher-Stack, “Dismissed” n.p.). Because the Mormon mythology presents spatial dichotomies in absolute terms (Zion/Babylon, Tree of Life/Great and Spacious Building, etc.), the Sunday school teacher was either at the center or at the periphery, either inside or outside, either righteous or wicked.

This brings us back to the idea that ward buildings are refuges of Zion amidst Babylon. As I argued earlier, by standardizing appearance the LDS Church has attempted to create a clear line between believers and nonbelievers, between members and non-members. They have attempted to make themselves “a peculiar people” (*KJB*, 1 Peter 2.9) and to set themselves apart for God. As the Church has worked (and continues to work) toward the creation of a distinct Mormon identity, it becomes crucial to ask, as Harvey asks, “Whose collective memory is being celebrated here...? Whose aesthetics really count...?” (105). Is it the collective memory of Mormons with pioneer ancestry, most (if not all) of whom are of Western European descent? Is it the collective memory of recent converts to the faith in Latin or South America? Southeast Asia or Africa? Is it men or women? By standardizing plans, the LDS Church privileges certain voices over others and ignores the cultural differences that abound within its membership. Thus, instead of cultural sensitivity in design, which would lead to cultural differentiation in worship and practice, “all members must ultimately worship in the same way” (Bradley, “Cloning” 23) and in the same standard(ized) building. Thus, by standardizing meetinghouses, the LDS Church has promoted a standardized practice of worship and a standard to which individuals are meant to conform.

Conclusion

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is recorded as saying: “whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it” (*KJB*, Luke 17.33). In this dictum can be read the idea of conformity and congregational or cultural unity, even at the expense of individuality. Reading the loss of life (or individuality) as conformity, it becomes clear that *fitting in*, not standing out, is how an individual remains in Zion. In order to fit in, an individual must conform to standards of appropriateness in dress and appearance. Beyond this, however, individuals must also refrain from posing questions and ideas that would trouble the status quo of perceived uniformity and invite contention.

As a religious organization, the LDS Church has the right to maintain its view of doctrinal purity. As evidenced by the story of the Sunday School instructor recounted above, however, the enforcement of what is “pure” or “appropriate” can be as culturally founded as it is religiously warranted. Furthermore, mass excommunications, such as the excommunications of the “September Six” in September of 1993 (Fletcher-Stack, “Healthy of Hurtful”), suggest that certain (intellectual, critical, or academic) questions and modes of thought are deemed severely inappropriate to the point that the questioners must be expelled from the pure in heart. In these examples, difference is shunned rather than embraced or negotiated, leaving behind a façade of sameness and uniformity.

Throughout this chapter, I have argued that LDS spatial mythologies and imposed standards of appearance (both upon individuals and the built environment) create a distinct sense of place within Mormon meetinghouses. The sense of place presented by the LDS Church is one of uniformity and conformity. It is a sense of place that overlooks difference in favor of (comm)unity (Caussé n.p.). It is a sense of place that allows those

who regularly worship in the meetinghouses to align themselves “with the saints, and [with] the household of God” (Eph. 2.19).

Such a sense of place seeks to remove—or at least not acknowledge—difference and becomes a non-place. As Gérald Caussé, a member of the presiding bishopric of the Church, said in 2013, “In this Church there are no strangers and no outcasts. There are only brothers and sisters” (n.p.). This suggestion, however, could be read as a re-articulation of the phrase in the Book of Mormon that there are “no Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites” (4 Ne 1.17), suggesting that transgressive (especially *visually* transgressive) individuals have been removed from ward buildings and ward communities.

Extending this idea beyond the local, the Church itself is composed of those who conform, not those who transgress, because the zionic sense of place is meant to be ubiquitous within the Church. This ubiquitous sense of place, a sense of place in which individuals are anonymized in favor of collective identity but in which individuals must prove their belonging through conforming, is at once meaningful and meaningless. Because this sense of place can be felt in any Mormon meetinghouse, it is a sense of non-place.

The contemporary practices in meetinghouse standardization, which contribute to a sense of non-place, have far-reaching effects in the Mormon Church. I have argued that through the practices of standard-plan building design, the LDS Church has created an environment that encourages fundamentalism, malaise, and a blasé attitude among its members. This is due to interactions between physical space and imagined spatial mythologies, which lead to a shared sense of place within and across geographies in the

Church. Because LDS mythologies are highly spatial, these mythologies are easily transferable into physical space. Ward buildings serve as the fulcrum on which mythologies and practices balance, allowing easy movement between practice and mythology.

Through standardizing ward meetinghouses, the LDS Church has engaged in *place-ing*. Because spaces/places are socially constructed, the practice of *place-ing* creates a feedback loop in which practices recreate a place that engenders those same practices. The socially-constructed spaces of ward buildings, then, can recreate the spatial binaries of mythology, which lead to increased movement toward the center and increased fundamentalism. Movements toward centrality result in a more homogenous, “average” body of practitioners: individuals become more standard, which, in turn, creates a more potent cultural identity or master status. The ward meetinghouse stands in as an easily identifiable visual symbol for this culture. Thus, in seeing these neutral non-places, it is easy to read the message that these distinct and recognizable landmarks convey: this land is Mormon land, Zion, the Kingdom of God. By “imprint[ing] the landscape...with distinctive, standardized meetinghouse architecture” (Meinig 49), the LDS Church has created geographical regions of contemporary Mormon culture and a distinct sense of (non)place.

But the social-constructed nature of place allows for a reshaping of (sense of) place through practice. Thus, while the LDS Church engages in *place-ing* in order to create and maintain a distinct sense of place, such sense of place is not fixed, but malleable. In other words, the members who practice and worship in place have the ability to reshape that place after their own image (Harvey 4) through transgressive acts

that bring visibility to the boundaries of what is and what is not appropriate (Cresswell, *In Place* 23).

In the following chapter, I will explore whether and how such transgressive acts are occurring and whether or not LDS practitioners are engaging in placemaking practices at the local level. Through ethnographic fieldwork at a ward building in Utah, I will interrogate my own assumptions about the practice of *place*-ing and its role in encouraging a sense of (non)place in a particular meetinghouse.

Notes

¹ It is important to note that the majority of the Book of Mormon is written from a Nephite sensibility. Furthermore, while some criticize the depiction of the Lamanites as a racist conception, an involved discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of this project to resolve. Yet it is important to understand that Nephites and Lamanites have historically been viewed as racially distinct groups of people, and this understanding has contributed to policies within the LDS Church. For more on this, see note 3.

² Since Nephi and his followers fled from Laman and Lemuel and their followers, the Nephites and Lamanites lived in distinct areas. While the Book of Mormon is not always explicit where each nation lived in relation to the other, one verse in the book of “Helaman” gives particular insight: “And there they did fortify against the Lamanites, from the west sea, even unto the east; it being a day’s journey for a Nephite, on the line which they had fortified and stationed their armies to defend their north country” (Helaman 4.7). At least for part of the (hi)story, the Nephites populated the north, while the Lamanites inhabited the south.

³ While one of the Church’s missions is to take the gospel to all nations (*Ezra Taft Benson* 167; D&C 133.8), not all bodies have been considered equally “inside”. This is evident in the priesthood and temple ban that affected black men and women in the Church. And while the ban was lifted in 1979, the effects are still being felt and are evident in such manifestations as the racial/ethnic make-up of the governing bodies of the Church (First Presidency, Quorum of Twelve Apostles, Quorum(s) of the Seventy, Relief Society General Presidency, Primary General Presidency, etc.). Another example of this unequal “insiderness” might be seen in the contemporary place of women in the Church. It is not the project of this thesis, however, to explore these avenues. For more on the priesthood and temple ban, see Lester Bush’s seminal essay “Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview” published in *Dialogue* (spring 1973).

⁴ While I use the term “wilderness” here, I do not mean to suggest that the Great Basin was devoid of humans or human influence. To the contrary, there were multiple communities of people that lived in the Great Basin region before white settlement. Rather, I use the term wilderness to denote the mythological connection between early Mormons and the Israelites of the Old Testament as well as to refer to the mindset of white settlers in the eastern United States at the time.

⁵ This is evident in an honor code policy at Brigham Young University (Utah, Idaho, and Hawaii campuses) that requires students who are baptized members of the Church to attend church meetings, whether or not they still believe in or practice the faith, in order to maintain ecclesiastical endorsement and maintain their position as a student in good standing. According to the Honor Code: “LDS students must fulfill their duty in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, attend Church meetings, and abide by the rules and standards of the Church on and off campus” (n.p.).

⁶ While the Church establishes rules of dress and grooming that apply to all bodies, female bodies have been particularly targeted by the concept of (im)modesty. While it is not my project to address this gender bias, it is important to note that not all bodies are equal. For more on the gendered nature of (im)modesty in the LDS Church, see: *For the Strength of Youth*.

⁷ This uniformity is perceived, or imagined, because, as Benedict Anderson has argued, it ignores “actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail” (7). Instead, a unity of appearance (one pair of earrings, a white shirt, no tattoos) is the metric by which community is created.

⁸ Beyond architectural design, the Church standardizes the interior design elements of ward buildings such as artwork. According to a document titled “Meetinghouse Artwork Guidelines for Facilities Managers and Project Managers” outlines further standards for artwork and artwork placement. According to the document, “Artwork enhances the interior of meetinghouses by creating a spiritual, reverent atmosphere. The artwork should be of high artistic quality and depict the life and image of Christ and His ministry with dignity and reverence. It should teach gospel principles with clarity through easily recognizable illustrations of the scriptures, and portray Church doctrine accurately. It should portray meaningful aspects of the Restoration of the gospel and the history and heritage of the Church. It should also reflect gospel-centered values and lifestyle” (n.p.). Further qualifying the above statement, *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010) states that, “Church approved artwork for meetinghouses is obtained through the facilities manager using the *Church Facilities Artwork* catalog... Pictures and other artwork may be placed in appropriate locations in the meetinghouse. However, they may not be placed in the chapel or near the baptismal font. Statues, murals, and mosaics are not authorized... Artwork in meetinghouses should be properly framed” (21.2.1). “Meetinghouse Artwork Guidelines for Facilities Managers and Project Managers” further outlines where and at what heights art should be hung, as well as what types of images are appropriate for different locations within the building.

⁹ For more on the Church's acknowledgment regarding racially discriminatory policies, see "Race and the Priesthood" on LDS.org. See also "'Dark' Skin No Longer a Curse in Online Book of Mormon" by Joanna Brooks.

CHAPTER 4

“IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF THE WORLD” REVISITED: TENSION, PECULIARITY, AND THE DESIRE TO FIT IN

Introduction

Places are texts to be read and interpreted. While architects and designers—or in the case of ward buildings, Church officials—dictate authorial intent, there are other authors of meaning(s) in place. These other authors are the users of a place. As Tim Cresswell suggests, “[p]eople read places by acting in them” and that “[o]ur actions in place are evidence of our preferred reading” but “[t]his practice is, in turn, informed by the always already existing meaning of the place” (*In Place* 16), which, as described earlier, is informed by *place*-ing practices. In considering places as texts, it is necessary to understand that authorial intent and reader interpretation are in dialectical conversation. The author and the reader, the architect and the user, the Church and the member work together, and at times in opposition, to create meaning.

Throughout this work I have argued that the LDS Church, as author, ascribes specific meanings to its ward buildings through *place*-ing practices, and that those meanings prescribe particular practices for the members who use those buildings. This is evidenced in guidebooks such as the *Facilities Management Guidelines for Meetinghouses and Other Church Properties*, which suggest that “[m]eetinghouses are dedicated for worship, religious instruction, and other Church-related activities. Other

meetinghouse uses are discouraged...The use should be in harmony with the building's sacred purposes" (2). The language of this official policy is in line with Christofferson's assertion that ward buildings are intended to be sacred sites dedicated to the Lord (n.p.).

As I argued in previous chapters, however, ward buildings are not strictly sacred, and not all Church-related uses are of a sacred nature. For instance, and as I recounted earlier, basketball games are hardly sacred and even move into the realm of the profane. Nevertheless, ward meetinghouses are officially presented as sacred through the spatial mythologies that surround them. Through these spatial mythologies, members are encouraged to read ward buildings as refuges where righteous Saints can escape the wicked world. But the officially sanctioned meanings encouraged through the *place*-ing of the Church—the authorial intent of the Church—are not the only interpretations that exists. Being socially constructed, these buildings and their (ascribed) meanings are also influenced by the practices that exist within them. Local members and congregations, in conversation with the official policies and intents, create permeable places through which the sacred and the profane can move seamlessly. The creation of such permeable places, which occurs through transgressive practices, exists in contrast to the *place*-ing of these ward buildings, which encourages specific and rigid meanings and practices.

The coexistence of sense(s) of place and non-place character, the coexistence of the sacred, the secular, and the profane, lead to sites of tension: sites that, in some ways, allow for multiplicity. However, the multiplicity that exists within ward buildings is still governed by the intended meaning(s) and spatial mythologies that inform them, and ward buildings are not completely open to multiple interpretations and multiple meanings. Rather, there is a degree of play in the prescribed meaning that allows individuals and

congregations to alter building meanings within the context of LDS *place*-ing practices. While the centralized LDS church attempts to strictly govern the ward buildings in order to maintain a particular sense of place, member practices can create alternatives to the official sense of place. Ward buildings and their meanings are, as I have suggested earlier, attempts at being “in the world but not of the world” (Cook n.p.).

The phrase used by Cook and popular within the Mormon lexicon is suggestive of the tension that the LDS Church has confronted since early in its history. This chapter explores how the tension that exists in the dictum to be in the world while not being of the world is manifest in the architectural and design practices of the Mormon Church. In doing so, I explore historical moments within the Church that exemplify this tension, and I suggest, through analysis of my ethnographic fieldwork in Utah, that this tension still manifests itself in contemporary practices. In exploring this tension, I am careful to note moments when individual and congregational practices escape this tension. Nevertheless, through my observations, certain patterns have emerged that suggest that the tension, which is both historically and materially present, informs, if subconsciously, contemporary practice(s) within ward meetinghouses.

I begin by exploring historical and material manifestations of this tension, drawing on the works of architectural historian Thomas Carter and historical geographer Richard Francaviglia to explore how being in the world but not of the world encouraged material and spatial practices within the early Church. Using this historical context as a backdrop, I suggest that the tension present in Cook’s words informs both contemporary building practices and member practices within those buildings. I draw from official policy documents, architectural drawings, as well as ethnographic fieldwork¹ to explore

how contemporary practices align with and diverge from this tension.

In order to fully explore these ideas, I return to the concepts of non-place, spatial mythologies, and *place*-ing. I explore how these concepts work in concert to inform the spatial practices of local members, and briefly suggest some consequences of these practices on the material world of the Mormon ward meetinghouse.

Historical Tensions

Being in the world but not of the world requires coexistence in multiple “locations”: the world and heaven. It requires being in the righteous city of Zion while also being in the secular world of Babylon. Attempting to navigate two locations simultaneously leads to a tension between peculiarity and fitting in, which Thomas Carter suggests was forced upon Mormon settlers in the Great Basin with the advent of the Transcontinental Railroad and pressure from the U.S. government to conform to American ideas and practices (xxvii). As historian Leonard Arrington suggests, with these additional pressures, “the church no longer offered a geographic and institutional alternative to Babylon” (qtd. in Carter xxvii). Because of this, the Church, which had previously self-identified as peculiar, was required to redefine its relationship with the American mainstream.

In the eastern and Midwestern states that housed the Church in its periods of gestation and infancy, Joseph Smith planned cities for the saints.² In line with planning thought of the time, these cities of Zion were square plats that centered around temples (Francaviglia 28-36). The symbolic and utilitarian purposes of placing sacred temples at the center of town are not easily lost. For Mormon founder Joseph Smith, the cities of Zion that he planned were meant to be cities for the righteous to dwell and usher in the

second coming of Christ. In other words, the Mormon city was meant to be a sacred and spiritual city (31-2). In this way, the early Saints designated themselves as a peculiar people: a people of God who avoided the world of Babylon.

This peculiarity contributed to tensions, which were often violent, between the early Saints and their non-Mormon neighbors, resulting in the Mormon exodus to the Great Basin.³ In the Great Basin, Mormons were isolated from other white settlers⁴ and could be a peculiar people without fear of persecution. And, following the pattern established by Joseph Smith, early city planning in the Mormon west was centered on the temple. Situating the temple⁵ at the center of town was a material manifestation of a theological principle that God should be at the center of all life, public and private⁶ (Carter 12, Maynes n.p.). However, as non-Mormon settlers moved into the Great Basin and as the U.S. government applied pressures regarding LDS religious practices,⁷ the Church was required to “fit in” to mainstream American practices and abandon certain utopian practices, such as communitarian living and theocratic ideologies,⁸

Thomas Carter argues that the Sanpete Valley of Utah is a prime case study for how early Mormons engaged with this tension between fitting in to the larger American culture while maintaining the peculiarity that Latter-day Saints believed set them apart from the world. He suggests that in the Sanpete Valley this tension manifest itself through the material world of city planning and architectural design, which culminated in the movement of the temple from the center of the city to the periphery in order to create clear distinction between the sacred and the secular (Carter 14).

The tension described by Carter is further manifest in the contemporary building practices of the Church, which incorporate intentional architectural and design elements

that cause LDS meetinghouses to both stand out and remain inconspicuous and which parallel the historical tensions in the Mormon unconscious. In exploring material manifestations of the tension, I will focus primarily on one building, the Wasatch building, where I performed ethnographic fieldwork and analysis of the physical building. I will also draw from official building policies in order to express the deliberate nature of the architectural and design elements of contemporary meetinghouses.

Material Manifestations

The Wasatch building in Utah is at once standard and unique. The building is a Heritage 09T style “D” building, which follows standardized plans and, as argued earlier, contributes to the non-place character of the building. While this building exhibits non-place character in its disconnection to local place, it is also unique in that it is a “green” prototype building that the Church experimented with in 2010. The meetinghouse features rooftop solar panels, sections of xeriscape and native-plant rock gardens, and a smart sprinkler system that monitors soil moisture levels, among other features (Moulton n.p.). Also unique to this building—at least to suburban meetinghouses in Utah—is its location: it is not surrounded by homes, but by fields. Despite housing two wards and a branch,⁹ the building is not situated in a neighborhood where people live. Rather, the building is surrounded by farmed or grazed fields and sits just north of a bird refuge. Because of this, the building is out of the way and requires members to commute to Church activities and worship services: mostly by car.¹⁰

While the vast parking lots that surround the building suggest an appropriate means of travel to the building, they also reflect the tension housed within this particular building. The meaning expressed through rooftop solar panels—which is intended, in

part, to help local members “consider their own environmental stewardship” (Moulton n.p.) and to denote, as one-time presiding Bishop of the Church, H. David Burton, suggests, that resource conservation “has become a vital part of [LDS] DNA” (qtd. in Moulton n.p.)—is undermined by the necessity of vehicular travel to/from the building for worship services. Instead of a consistent message being delivered to the members that use the ward building, there is a disconnect between fragmented parts. While the building, which is explicitly marked as “green” by the rooftop solar panels, is meant to promote resource conservation, which, according to Burton, is “very doctrinally sound” (ibid n.p.), its vast parking lots and its distance from members’ homes encourages resource consumption. Thus, members are caught in a tension between two competing meanings: conservation and consumption.

This tension fits within the tension of being in the world while not being of the world because it highlights the competing ideologies present in the design of the building. On the one hand, members are presented with the consumerist ideology of the capitalist world, which advocates consuming the material things of the world, while on the other hand doctrinally-sound conservation practices, which privilege foregoing worldly conveniences and goods in favor of a more spiritual existence, are offered. The ward building itself promotes both ideologies simultaneously by promoting renewable energy and requiring fossil-fuel dependence, and individual members are charged with navigating the space between these two meanings.

The building itself is made of red brick, vaguely reminiscent of the historic buildings on the town’s State Street, and has a low sloping roof. As mentioned in chapter 2, the piers of the building are covered with local stone, which alludes to the physical

location of the building and suggests an “of the place”-ness about the building. On the western, street-facing, end of the building is a tall white steeple with rectangular faux-windows near the top, which, as steeples have historically done, references the building’s connection with the heavens. The steeple, which reaches 70 feet into the air, stands more than twice the height of the main roof.¹¹ Other than the steeple, the only feature that establishes the building as a site of worship is an inlaid concrete sign that reads: “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Visitors Welcome” (Figure 2).

Steeple, as Martha Bradley suggests, carry symbolic weight as “the bridge between the physical and the metaphysical world” (“Steeple” 41) by which the angels ascend and descend (*KJB* Gen 28.12). As such, the steeple is a key feature in designating a place as sacred and creates the visual and metaphysical heterogeneity of space suggested by Mircea Eliade (20). Steeples, however, have not always appeared on LDS meetinghouses and, when present, have served various purposes. According to Bradley¹²:

There are four basic types of LDS meetinghouses: (1) no steeple; (2) a fully integrated (substantial) steeple; (3) separate (but often not equal); (4) the afterthought steeple which comes in two types: (a) a diminutive steeple placed on top designed without any thought of a steeple form, or (b) the steeple as logo. (“Steeple” 42)

Under Bradley’s rubric, the Wasatch building yields an afterthought steeple. Although less diminutive than steeples on earlier standard plans, the steeple is not integrated into the building form as it is in meetinghouses built between 1880 and 1920. Rather, the steeple serves a specific purpose: designating buildings as Mormon buildings.

As described earlier, this uniform appearance serves the same purpose as the signs in front of the non-places of capitalist modernity such as Starbucks or McDonald’s. The steeple is a marketing tool distinguishing LDS meetinghouses from all other buildings.

Standing above the rooftops of suburban homes, Mormon steeples serve as recognizable markers of Zion, even as the rest of the exterior is non-descript.¹³ Through distinct and standard design elements, the ward building advertises Mormon space, calling attention to the building and marking it as different from its surroundings and “not of the world.” Not being integrated into the building itself, however, the steeple functions only as an outward expression and is forgotten once inside.

Along with the steeple, the Wasatch building’s entryways present themselves outward. All of the entryways are comprised of two sets of double doors that are separated by a vestibule. While all the vestibule doors are glass, the exterior doors sport a design that is meant to be seen from outside and which is meant to “portray an image of dignity and reverence” (*AEC Design Guidelines* 1.1). These exterior doors stand in contrast to the interior set of doors, which are undecorated. This double set of doors functions to project reverence and dignity outward. Once inside, however, all façades are removed, and simple, unobtrusive, and inconspicuous elements prevail. The peculiarity that marks the building as “not of the world” is lost once inside the first set of doors and “fitting in” to the interior world of the building prevails. Furthermore, the distinction of each individual member is lost in the congregation, where members “do as others do to be yourself” (Augé 85).

As with exteriors, the portrayal of dignity and reverence is also the prevailing goal of interior design features (*AEC Design Guidelines* 2.1). Unlike exteriors, however, the reverence and dignity of the interior is intentionally unobtrusive. Nothing about the design and decoration draws attention to itself. Color schemes for everything from the purple furnishings and carpeting to the white walls and dark wood accents in the Wasatch

building are preselected (2.2). Such particularities create an interior that “help[s] members of the Church and visitors feel comfortable and welcome” (2.1) in the non-place anonymity of the ward building (Augé 86) that “portray(s) an image of dignity, integrity, respectability, and reverence” (*AEC Design Guidelines* 2.1). Furthermore, the building is austere:

Excessive adornment that conveys a feeling of opulence is not the desirable appearance for meetinghouses. Caring for the poor and needy, both spiritually as well as temporally, is a central theme of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Excessive adornment that portrays an image of wastefulness does not represent this theme and is inappropriate. (2.1)

This austerity is established in the mass-produced standardization of all design elements, from the preset color schemes to the preselected art prints and frames that hang on the walls. A guiding principle in all architectural and design elements seems to be inconspicuousness; as one member I interviewed stated, “LDS buildings are simple and the symbolism is basic, but I like it that way.”

Inconspicuous design elements, which “should not create distractions or otherwise call undue attention to any particular feature by virtue of their color, pattern, or texture” (ibid 2.2), create a neutral, non-place, interior. In this neutrality, however, some members find access to the divine. One member noted the distinction between ward buildings and the “world” contributes to her spiritual experiences in the building, stating: “Set apart from ‘the world’ the simple structure, which is not gaudy or overly ornate, but utilitarian, helps me feel divine power and influence.” Even as one member finds the Wasatch building a place set apart, another suggests, “I’m happy that I have a building to worship in. That said, I’m not really emotional about what building I worship in. I’ve attended in many different buildings though-out [sic] my life and I’m just glad I have a place to meet

with those who share my same belief system.”

These expressions offer insight into the tensions between the sense of place and the sense of non-place and between being in the world while not of the world that exist within the Wasatch building. While for one member, the building itself matters as a place set-apart, for another, the building is irrelevant; rather, anyplace is as good as any other place, so long as there is a (imagined) community of believers. Thus, for one, the sense of place is a refuge from the world, while for the other, the sense of non-place is interchangeable and not site-specific. Furthermore, because the building is distinctly Mormon, it is set apart from the world. Being set-apart, it is not of the world. And yet, the building is embedded within a standardized suburban aesthetic that is decidedly of the world.

If, as Bradley suggests, “In architecture there is no such phenomenon as accidental form...[it] is the embodiment of idea and belief” (“Steeple” 39), then the tension that exists within standard-plan meetinghouses is the embodiment of an ideological, theological, or cultural tension that exists within the people and culture that create these buildings. As the design guidelines for meetinghouses articulate, there is nothing accidental in the form or the design of LDS ward buildings. From the designation of “20 inches per person” on the pews in the chapel (*AEC Design Guidelines* 1.5) to specifications regarding lighting fixtures (9.6) to dictating what artwork can be hung and where it should be located (2.8-9), the ward meetinghouses, such as the Wasatch building, are planned with meticulous detail and specific intent.¹⁴

Such specific and meticulous detail contributes to a distinct Mormon style (Kimball n.p.) while creating replicable buildings rife with non-place character. Such a

style is meant to present itself to the world: it is meant to be a city on a hill or a candle on a candlestick that gives light to the world (*KJB* Matt. 5.14-15). Such distinct style is meant to be noticed and seen and felt; it is meant to create a distinct sense of place. And yet, once inside the building—once the style has been accepted and adopted by an individual or congregation—that style becomes a uniform of inconspicuousness and anonymity. Nothing, including the people, are meant to stand out, and sense of place is forfeited to the non-place characters of the building. Between sense of place and sense of non-place, the building appears caught between trying to be two things: in the world and separate from the world.

In the next section I explore how this tension, which is literally built into the ward meetinghouse, influences the practices of individual members and the Wasatch Front ward¹⁵ congregation, one ward that meets in the Wasatch building. Furthermore, I explore ways in which members transgress the particular meanings ascribed to the building in order to create their own sense of place from the (non)place of the meetinghouses.

Tension in Practice

In exploring the ways that members create meaning in place and respond to the tensions presented in the material architectural and design elements of the meetinghouses, I draw from fieldnotes taken while observing worship services and interviews I performed with congregants of the Wasatch Front ward.¹⁶ During my observations, several themes emerged—which I term sacralization, persecution, and permeability—and guide my analysis. These themes at once express the idea of placemaking and reinforce the concept of *place-ing*, exploring the dialectical tension that exists between these

concepts, while also responding to the tensions housed within the materiality and spatiality of the building. As I argued in Chapter 2, placemaking is a bottom-up tactic (de Certeau 35) used by communities to create (sense of) place, while *place*-ing is a strategy of control used by leadership to designate desired meanings and practices in place.¹⁷

Sacralization

Because of the non-place character of the Wasatch building, it is not explicitly sacred. Rather, just as the steeple is an afterthought and not an integrated spiritual symbol, sacredness, too, is an afterthought. And yet, according to high-ranking officials like D. Todd Christofferson, the ward building is a sacred place. In order to create the sacredness alluded to, then, members and congregations engage in regular sacralizing practices. One member I interviewed phrased it this way: “I believe that what is done in the building through the authority of the priesthood, by faith in Jesus Christ and by the influence and power of the Spirit helps sacralize the chapel and church building.” Such belief allows members, who—like the member who said, “I’m not really emotional about what building I worship in”—approach and enter the building as a non-place to create their own sacredness within the building, even if that sacredness is temporary.

But these sacralizing practices are in tension with other practices that are encouraged by and reinforce the non-place character of the building. Such a tension is suggestive of the ambiguous meanings presented by the building’s design. Because of these ambiguous meanings, members can see the building, as one member did, as both “a depressing, cold, horribly designed space” and “like home.” If the building can be both a non-place and a home-like refuge, members can create what they desire in the building.

At the Wasatch Front ward, sacrament meetings are noisy, but the noise that

exists during sacrament meeting is but a muted version of the chatter that occurs prior to and immediately following meetings. Throughout my time in the field, I noted that before the sacrament meetings began, the chapel served as a social hall for members to greet one another. On multiple occasions members approached me and included me in this socialization as well, especially once I became more known to members. And despite one member's remarks that participants "are encouraged to do their socializing and visiting outside of the chapel so as to preserve the spirit of reverence that should exist there," another member found meaning in the chapel as a "community center." In short, through transgressing official policies that designate the chapel as separate, members homogenize space within the ward building, which, as I argued in Chapter 2, contributes to the non-place character of the chapel and the building as a whole, further encouraging its use as a non-place: as a site of circulation, consumption, and communication (Augé viii).

In using and understanding the chapel as a social hall rather than its official designation as "a separate room designated for worship services" in which "members...should be especially reverent" (*Facilities* 2), local members transgress official meanings and create their own meanings. Such transgression, as Tim Cresswell suggests, "does not, by definition, rest on the intentions of the actors but on the *results*—on the 'being noticed' of a particular action" (*In Place* 23). Unlike resistance, which relies heavily on intention, transgression exists in terms of its consequences. By using the term transgression, rather than resistance, I suggest that, while most local members I interviewed stated that the chapel is distinct, they do not necessarily view their socialization in the chapel as out of place. Rather, I argue that while *place*-ing strategies of the Church ascribe both non-place character and mythological significance to ward

buildings, member practices favor non-place interpretations. In doing so, members engage in a form of transgressive placemaking that questions the official meaning of the chapel as the most sacred room in the ward building, even as they express that it is, and highlights the tension that official *place*-ing practices engender. Thus, while officially stated, and in the minds of many members, the chapel should exist as separate and sacred, in practice, it is a multipurpose room that can shift between the sacred and the secular. Furthermore, the transgressive practices that cause the chapel to transform from a room of worship to a room of socialization exist in tension with other practices that attempt to sacralize the chapel, such as closing the chapel off from other rooms before meetings and sharing personal experiences over the pulpit.

This tension between official and understood meanings and local practices is evident in the openness of the chapel, as based on local need and determined by local leadership. As is standard for contemporary buildings, and as I have articulated earlier, the chapel is connected to the cultural hall in the Wasatch building (Figure 3). The two rooms are separated by an accordion door. However, when the accordion door is open, as I observed during my time in the field was typical presacrament meeting practice, the chapel and cultural hall together create a single, large and conflicted room. Physically, the purple carpet stands in sharp contrasts with the light-colored hardwood floor of the cultural hall; the basketball standards and the pulpit coexist, even as they contradict each other; and as one member expressed the difference: “Growing up, I remember going to my ward house during the week for an event and still whispering and walking through the chapel, where in the gym, you can be a bit more loud.”

Emotionally, the rooms are also distinct as expressed by another member: “To

me, the chapel is a more reverent place than other rooms in the church. I play volleyball weekly in the gym, but the chapel is a room where we worship and partake of the sacrament, so it is very special to me.” When viewed separately, as this member suggests, there is a difference between the gym and the chapel. But when the accordion door is open, the chapel and the gym become one, and together, these features comprise a room that is unsure of its purpose. Such insecurity is reflected in the practices of the local members, who treat the room almost simultaneously as both sacred place and social hall.

On most Sundays, however, prior to the beginning of sacrament meeting, young men wearing white shirts close the accordion door, “to maintain a sacred environment,” “to have a much more intimate and quiet sacrament meeting,” and “to reduce noise and traffic,” as members informed me, separating the secularity of the cultural hall from the sanctity of the chapel. This practice designates the chapel as distinct from the other parts of the building and allows it to be a physically, even if not socially or culturally, “separate room designated for worship” (*Facilities 2*). By closing the door, the local members reaffirm the official stance propagated by spatial mythologies that the chapel is sacred and separate from other rooms, despite the earlier transgressions that occurred. In other words, local members oscillate readily and rapidly between interpretations of the building, at one moment aligning with spatial mythologies before quickly realigning with the non-place character.

Despite helping to sacralize the chapel, accordion doors are not always closed. On one occasion the accordion door remained open to accommodate worshipers who were sitting on the folding chairs in the cultural hall. On another occasion, the doors were closed before the meeting, only to be reopened once the meeting had begun. And while

one member articulated that “it is fine to open the doors” to accommodate more people, another said, “I prefer [the accordion door] closed because it makes it more quaint and intimate. The cultural hall/gym doesn't feel very spiritual.”

And where does this tension between meanings and emotions leave members when, as I suggested earlier, as soon as sacrament meeting ends, the sacralized chapel reverts once more to a site of socialization? It leaves them with ephemeral places of sacredness, and it requires them to engage in other practices in the hope of reclaiming the sacred once more. Because sacredness is an afterthought in the building, practices that sacralize the chapel are important.¹⁸ Yet the practices that members engage in do not create permanent sanctity, rather, they create ephemerally sacred places.

And members seem to move just as readily from sacred expressions of faith to casual conversation with friends and neighbors as they are to move from the ward building to their cars once church is over. Thus, just as the ward building, with its non-place character, is a site of circulation, so too are the sacred places created through member practice. Just as the building is not designed as a place to linger, because sacredness seems an afterthought, neither are the sacred places created by members. If members do linger in the chapel after the meeting (and I noted that quite a few members do), they linger in the social chapel, not the sacred chapel. At the close of the meeting, any sacredness that was present, dissipates. Conversations return to the world outside of the church building: I am asked about my studies; I hear members discussing yesterday's football games. The sacred places are gone, replaced by the places of secular chit-chat, evidencing once more that this ward building—like the others that follow the same standard plan—is in the world and only occasionally not of the world.

While the practices explored above sacralize space within the Wasatch building through constant negotiations with the non-place characters of the meetinghouse, other practices occur to create other meanings in place. As described previously, the Wasatch building is materially constructed with non-place character: everything about the building's structure is predetermined, which leaves little room for alternate interpretations. As described previously, however, members, through various practices, do create alternative places, even if those places are ephemeral. Despite the non-place character of the neutral design features, local members create meaning through two other categories of practices that I term permeability and persecution. While these two categories of practice are not mutually exclusive and both respond to the *place*-ing practices of the Church and to the spatial mythologies addressed in Chapter 3, they create meaning in different ways. On the one hand, persecution practices work in consort with the Church's *place*-ing of the ward building to reinforce the official sense of place within the ward meetinghouse. On the other hand, permeability practices respond to the *place*-ing of the ward building to at once create alternate meanings and to reinforce the non-place characteristics in the building.

Persecution

My use of persecution may be slightly misleading. I do not use it here to denote that members of the Wasatch Front ward actively persecute other groups or others within their own congregation. Rather, I use the word persecution to suggest that through the practices I will describe below, the members of the Wasatch Front ward create a unity that reinforces the persecution myth of the early Church, which manifests itself through member language and other practices. These practices, and their reification of the

persecution myth, perform the dominant *place*-ing strategies of the Church within the space of the ward building.

As described previously, the Church faced great persecution in its early years. This persecution informed early Church members' beliefs that they were the chosen people of God. It also helped define the members of the Church as peculiar and different from mainstream America. Such an origin story spawned an "us versus them" mentality among early members, which has continued on to the present moment.

In my examination of spatial mythologies within the Church, I suggested that certain practices, such as dress and appearance, serve as litmus tests for righteousness and create a separation between the Church and the world. In this section I will argue that the *place*-ing practices of the Church engender both real and imagined unification within the ward through adoption of an official set of mythologies and practices, which include practices such as dress and appearance. I will also suggest that such unification, arrived at through performance of dominant *place*-ing strategies, helps reify the binary between Zion and Babylon that exists within the spatial mythologies of the Church. The Zion-Babylon dichotomy, however, remains abstract in the material practices of the members.

The Wasatch Front ward is a mainly homogenous congregation, consisting of mostly white, mostly middle-class, mostly young families. Furthermore, as I learned from a few members, many of the adults had grown up in the local county; as one member mentioned, people from the County tend to stay in the County. This demographic homogeneity aligned with observed member—especially male—appearance, which followed closely the official policies of the Church. With such homogeneity in demographic make-up along with shared religious beliefs—including the dress and

grooming standards endorsed by the Church, the congregation lends itself to strong unity, which plays an important role in the meaning of the ward building.

This unity, like the “imagined reality” of early Christendom is “overwhelmingly visual and aural” (B. Anderson 23) and manifests itself in two distinct, yet mutually constitutive, ways, both of which are linked to the Church’s *place*-ing strategies. The first is an “imagined” unity, which draws on the spatial mythologies set forth by the Church and is mostly visual, while the second is a “real” unity that is mostly aural. While disparate, both of these forms of unity emerge from the *place*-ing strategies employed by the Church and reinforce the persecution myth within the ward building.

“Imagined” unity refers to an understanding of (comm)unity that flattens difference (B. Anderson 7). It is based on assumption and is arrived at through several means, which draw upon both the non-place character of the ward building as well as the spatial mythologies of the building. Because the building is a distinctly Mormon building, there is a certainty of meaning among its users. As a Mormon place, it is rife with cultural understandings and expectations. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of its users are Mormon. In this way, the visual understanding transmitted by a car arriving in the parking lot is that the driver and passengers are Mormon. This assumption allows users of the building to pass in the parking lot or hallways “without ever becoming acquainted, and still be connected” (25) because, if nothing else, they have common shared beliefs.

During my interviews, multiple members expressed that this common shared belief was central to their understanding of the building. As one member put it, worshipping in the building “means a strong relationship reinforced with those of like-minded faith.” Another member stated that the building “gives me a place to go to be

with others who want to learn and share.” According to members, the building, itself, acts as a unifying agent by bringing religiously like-minded individuals together. This unity is “imagined” because it flattens difference.

Similarly, the *place*-ing strategies of the Church, which encourage standards of dress and appearance, serve to create a visual unity, which, in the Wasatch Front ward, is further enhanced by demographic homogeneity. Entering the building, members see others who look and dress like them. This is most apparent in the men, who overwhelmingly wear white shirts, ties, and keep their hair close-cut. While most of the men of the ward maintained clean-shaven faces, there were a few that wore facial hair. A few of the adult men also participated in an informal “No-shave November,” growing out their facial hair for the month of November before quickly reverting back to a clean-shaven look in December. The pressure to wear the official “uniform” is so strong that one member, when I complimented the color of his pants (a pale blue), responded “you have to shake things up every now and again.” His comment suggests an investment in the uniformity encouraged by Church leadership, a uniformity that marks pale blue slacks as different (enough) from the norm, and which risks upsetting overall unity. However, his comments also suggest a desire to resist the standards, even if only occasionally. Resisting too much, however, marks an individual as different, interrupting the visual unity.

Uniformity of appearance allows for immediate acceptance into the center, which supports the “imagined” unity that was found in the image of the building itself. Connections can be made based on visuals rather than other, more substantive characteristics. Despite this strong sense of unity that is created through

dress/appearance, members of the Wasatch Front ward were willing to accept me into their midst, despite my long hair, my beard, and the nonwhite shirts I wore. Beyond merely being allowed to attend with them, I was invited to an Elder's Quorum¹⁹ activity, and one member stated that I was never a stranger in their ward. While unity is aided by "appropriate" appearance, "out of place" appearance did not inhibit acceptance into the group. Rather, my status as a Mormon served as a more powerful unifier than my appearance. And just as my status as a Mormon served as a powerful agent in my acceptance, membership status, which may be inferred based on attendance at the building, serves as a powerful unifying agent within the ward, even as it is an "imagined" unifying force.

While the visual operations of the ward building and the uniform appearance of members contributes to "imagined" unity, aural communication, especially socialization and verbal expressions of belief, whether over the pulpit or in less formal settings such as Sunday School engenders a "real" unity among members. Because wards are comprised of individuals living within geographically delimited boundaries, members of the Wasatch Front ward do not necessarily choose to attend *this* ward in particular.²⁰ Rather, they were assigned to this ward based on their address. While all members of the ward live in the same bounded area, not all members see each other regularly throughout the week. Because of this, and as argued previously, the ward building functions as a social place as much as, if not more than, a sacred place. As I argued in the previous section, this socialization is problematic in that it grants primacy to the secular instead of the sacred within the ward building, the chapel in particular. This socialization, however, contributes to feelings of "real" unity between ward members by fostering, as one

interviewee stated, “good spiritual exchange with other Latter-day Saints within that geographical assignment.” This spiritual—and I argue, social—exchange further enhances the comfort-levels of individuals who share personal experiences over the pulpit or in class settings, and works to create a transient place of intimate vulnerability, which enhances unity in the ward.

Unity is also encouraged through adorning the building with aural symbols, both spoken and sung. These symbols come from a mother introducing her family over the pulpit and sharing an experience of receiving a priesthood blessing²¹ during pregnancy; they come from a father’s account of helping his son learn a lesson about the nature of God. Beyond the personal experiences that are shared, members create symbolic meaning by referencing officially endorsed texts or statements. This is evidenced in a youth speaker who quoted from *For the Strength of Youth*, the *Doctrine & Covenants*, as well as referencing current and historic prophets. While the sharing of the personal creates a “real” unity, the referencing of official documents is an aural means of proving belonging, much like the wearing of a white shirt is a means of representing belonging among men in the building.

The creation of aural symbols that decorate the space of the chapel is enhanced by the integrated speaker system, which creates the feeling of being surrounded by the aural symbols. Being surrounded by these aural symbols creates an intimacy that further enhances the feelings of unity within the group. This contributes to a feedback loop that further encourages intimacy, connection, and vulnerability. Thus, despite the public nature of the building (the sign out front reads “Visitor’s Welcome”), it is viewed as a private and safe place.

Through these public expressions of faith, members allow others into their lives, which encourages greater empathy, understanding, and compassion and translates into interpersonal relationships at the ward level. Because these personal experiences are shared at the ward building, they inscribe meaning into the material space of the meetinghouse. The meetinghouse, despite its non-place character, becomes a site of emotion and connection, which is expressed in the words of one interviewee: “I enjoy meeting with my fellow ward members as it gives me a sense of belonging and connection.” Another member articulated that, “Often I feel a sense of unity as [a] prayer is offered for individual members of the ward, for speakers, teachers, as well as local and general authorities.” Through these aural symbols such as prayers and testimonies, the ward building becomes a place of unity, shifting from non-place to place. In other words, through member practices, and in affirmation of official *place*-ing strategies, the ward building becomes Zion.

As the ward building is ascribed greater Zion character through unity-building, it becomes increasingly important to defend it from the Babylon of the carnal world. During my time in the field, I observed that Sunday School served as a time for members to regroup more completely in the fight against secularism. Because members have the opportunity to discuss doctrines and scriptures in depth in Sunday School and auxiliary meetings,²² these meetings allow members to engage in dialogue. Sunday school meetings, from my experience observing, present a particularly fascinating dynamic within the Wasatch Front ward.

During the 2015 calendar year, the Church as a whole studied the New Testament in Sunday school, and the Wasatch Front ward was no exception. Often these discussions

of the New Testament turned to the topic that I term persecution. Questions such as: “Has anyone had the opportunity to suffer persecution?” and, “Are there things that the Church is not popular for?” were asked on a regular basis. During my time observing, I never noticed moments of dissent or contention. I never noticed opposition to the suggestion that the Church and its members are persecuted. Rather, these questions were often met with knowing laughter from class members, and there seemed to be a consensus that the Church—even the members of the Wasatch Front ward—experienced persecution for its beliefs on a regular basis.

Such conversations are engendered by the combination of *place*-ing practices. On the one hand, the non-place character of the building provides members with “instructions for use” (Augé 77) and allows them to adorn the building with their own meanings. On the other hand, spatial mythologies encourage a sense of place founded upon persecuted cities: Nephite cities and the cities of early Mormondom, for example. If the spatial mythologies are understood as the instructions for use, then, through the *place*-ing practices of the Church, members are encouraged to see themselves as the persecuted, and reinforce that sense of place by readorning the building with aural symbols each week. The ward building, as one member suggested, becomes “a place in which I can, in a way, walk away from the typical activities of a carnal world” and find safety.

Beyond serving as a place for members to gather, the ward is also designed for members’ unity to be strengthened through communal singing. At least three times during each sacrament meeting, members sang congregational hymns. Sung in unison, the words of these songs enter into the material space of the building and contribute both to unifying and reifying the Zion-Babylon dichotomy through their use of “us/them”

language. Thus, aided by the organist and the choir director at the front of the congregation, members of the Wasatch Front ward gather together in defense of what is right, and sing (on multiple occasions during my fieldwork):

And now the foe advancing,
That valiant host assails,
And yet they never falter;
Their courage never fails.
Their Leader calls, “Be faithful!”
They pass the word along;
They see his signal flashing
And shout their joyful song:

*Victory, victory,
Thru him that redeemed us!
Victory, victory,
Thru Jesus Christ, our Lord!
Victory, victory, victory,
Thru Jesus Christ, our Lord! (Hymns 251)*

This song, with its chorus sung—and even shouted by the children in the congregation—boldly, reflects the sentiment expressed in the Sunday school class. The oppositional language reaffirms the belief that Church members are under siege and need to rally together in the ward buildings of Zion.

Through communal acts of expression in place, such as the singing of hymns; through personal insertion into the persecution mythos, the *place*-ing practices of the Church are reinforced: ward buildings become places for members to meet with other members. Furthermore, because non-places encourage individuals to “do as others do to be yourself” (Augé 85), the walls and hallways, empty of symbolic meaning, instruct members to follow the group. And as a group, members are encouraged to “liken all scriptures” (Book of Mormon 1 Ne 19.23), including those that affirm a mythology of persecution, to themselves.

Because members are encouraged to see themselves as a “peculiar,” “chosen,” or “special” people (1 Peter 2.9; “Topical Guide” 362; “Bible Dictionary” 748); because members are encouraged to see themselves as “the light of the world...[that] cannot be hid” (Matt 5.14); because members are told: “[l]et your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works” (Matt 5.16); because members are told to stand out while at the same time encouraged to “resist the temptation to draw attention to ourselves” (Uchtdorf n.p.), members must grapple with the tension between fitting in and standing out, between being peculiar and being popular, just as the building they meet in attempts the same. Thus, members enter the ward buildings in the dress and appearance standards of the Church in order to be inconspicuous. At the same time, by aligning with the meanings wrapped up in the ward building, they set themselves apart from the “world.” Furthermore, members desire particularity, which manifests itself in growing facial hair or wearing pale-blue pants, but do not want to interrupt the unity of the ward. They desire to let their lights shine, and, as a group, they mark themselves as different from the world, peculiar and chosen. Just as the exterior of ward buildings—the steeple in particular—presents a distinct image for the Church, Sunday School, and other class discussions create a distinct mythos of persecution for members while at the same time allowing them to blend in, just like the neutral and inconspicuous décor, with their fellow ward members.

Permeability

Just as the tension between standing out and blending in is apparent in both the material space of the meetinghouse and the cultural practices of the members, so too is the tension between the sacred and the secular. Throughout this thesis I have argued that

the Church projects sacredness upon its ward meetinghouses. Ward buildings are meant to be interpreted as sacred spaces, set apart from the world, with particular emphasis on the chapel, which is supposed to be even further removed. And yet, certain design features inhibit—or at least complicate—the sacredness of the building. Earlier I suggested that the chapel/cultural hall relationship allows the secular (and even the profane) to penetrate the sacred. And while such design elements complicate the sacred space of the chapel, member practices further complicate and compromise the ward building's sacred ethos.

In discussing the sacralization of space, I brought attention to the fact that the chapel, in particular, is at once a social hall and a room where the spirit of God can reside: it is both secular and sacred. The practices that I described above attempt to overcome the secularization of the space. Nevertheless, its use as both a place for conversation and a place for worship suggest the permeability of sacred space within the ward building. Despite the chapel being set apart for worship—despite it being a place where “members...should be especially reverent” (*Facilities* 2)—the chapel, in practice, is not set apart. Rather, it is a place where multiple purposes exist together, separated, at best, temporally rather than spatially.

The primary purpose of the chapel is for sacrament meeting, where covenants are renewed through the ordinance of the sacrament. One member expressed the importance of the sacrament in his life: “I view the Sacrament ordinance as an oasis of spiritual refreshment.” Most interviewees expressed similar regard for the sacrament, suggesting that during the ordinance of the sacrament, reverence and quiet should prevail. Before and after the sacrament ordinance, however, the room is not still: children and adults

come in and out of the chapel, choir director and organist move from the rostrum to the chapel pews and back again, individuals—especially on the first Sunday of each month²³—move from their seats in the chapel pews to the pulpit to either share their testimonies or offer a prayer. While some of this movement is germane to the meetings held in the chapel, other movements are not. And these movements suggest the permeability of the chapel as a sacred space.

The movements that most completely mark this permeability occur during the opening and closing hymns of the meeting. The singing of hymns, according to one member, works with the *place*-d meaning of the chapel to provide access to the divine. Hymns focus individuals' thoughts on the meeting at hand and unify the congregation. They also serve as moments of transition between the secular world and the sacred world. Hymns, in a sense, create heterogeneity in space.

While the hymns serve as transitions, member movement into and out of the chapel during the singing of hymns transgresses the meanings and purposes of these hymns. In disregarding the hymns and the mental and spiritual transitions they facilitate, members move from a sanctified to a secular world, against the current facilitated by the hymns. By their movement, they create a permeable boundary in an otherwise closed space: they move between the sacred and the secular without transition, suggesting the homogeneity of the meanings present in the ward building. As I argued in Chapter 2, the Church's failure to create materially heterogeneous spaces through its architectural and design elements (noted in particular through the entryways into the ward building) influences the ways in which members understand and use these spaces. The ward buildings, and even the chapel, are not distinct from the world outside. The sacred space

of the chapel is not distinct from the foyers, the hallways, or the cultural hall that rest outside (and sometimes within) its walls. The free movement into and out of the chapel, whether during the hymns or at other times, evidences the permeability and the blurring of the boundary that designates certain spaces as sacred.

This movement, however, suggests a disconnect between perceived meaning and practiced meaning within members. While members claim that the chapel is “a special place and sacred room,” “a more reverent place than other rooms in the church,” and “the most sacred room in the church building,” their practices, which allow for permeability, trouble the understanding of the chapel as a distinct and sacred place.

I have argued that movement suggests a permeability of space that leads to the homogenization of space. In doing so, I would be remiss if I failed to connect the homogenization of space with the concept of non-place. I do not wish to dwell at length upon this point here because I have covered it in Chapter 2, but I do wish to point out that church building policies that inscribe non-place characters to ward meetinghouses encourage behaviors and practices in the congregants that reinforce the non-place characters. Because Mormon sacred space is not markedly distinct from other space, its meaning has to perpetually be recreated through sacralizing practices. However, those practices do not physically alter the space—members do not inscribe physical symbols upon the walls of the chapel (indeed, “[artworks] may not be placed in the chapel” at all (*Handbook 2* 21.2.1)), nor do they elevate the design or décor of the chapel. Rather, member practices are fleeting, and when the hymn is over, the walls and the pews remain the same: neutral emblems of non-place. In other words, while using the chapel as a social place, or closing their eyes during prayer, members do not change the materiality

of the building, even as they create new meanings in place. Because they do not physically alter the building with their practices, members can still read the “instructions for use” (Augé 77) that the non-place character of the ward meetinghouse presents and respond to the non-place features of circulation, consumption, and communication (Augé viii).

The practice of circulation—what I term movement—is further enhanced by the language used by the Church to describe foyers and hallways. In the *AEC Design Guidelines* handbook, foyers and hallways are referred to as “circulation spaces” (1.14). These circulation spaces “should establish a sense of reverence and dignity so as to promote appropriate behavior upon entering the meetinghouse” (1.14). But “appropriate” is not defined in the guidelines. Nor is it adequately defined elsewhere. Rather, examples are given here and there—mostly of *inappropriate* or *unallowable* behaviors (*Handbook 2* 21.2)—and in most cases, a definition is arrived at through member interpretation of the building itself. Furthermore, the circulation spaces are not significantly differentiated from the chapel unless the chapel doors are closed, and on numerous occasions I observed individuals and small groups enter into and depart from (or vice versa) the chapel during sacrament meeting. In short, circulation, one of Augé’s key features of non-place (viii), is understood as an appropriate practice, even within places understood as sacred.

But circulation is not the only non-place character that is reinforced by member practices, and which encourages the permeability of space within ward buildings. The use of electronic devices and digital space also allows the secular to enter the sacred. On any given Sunday, I was able to observe members interacting with their phones and other

electronic devices, which one member suggested were possible distractions that “let the Spirit pass you by.” While some of the interactions are for use in class participation (most members, it seems, have scriptures and other Church materials downloaded onto their phones, tablets, etc.),²⁴ other behaviors I observed, such as texting, checking sports scores, and shopping, are not as innocent.

Through the use of wireless technology, members are able to be in multiple places at once: both at Church and at a sporting event or a shopping mall. Through these devices, members are able to both communicate with and consume the secular world even while they sit in the house of God. That such practices were observed within the Wasatch building further suggests the non-place character of the ward building and the homogenization of Mormon space, even as it attempts to stand out from its surroundings. Nothing about the material space of the building suggests that these practices are out of place or inappropriate. Rather, as words from the local pulpit suggest, electronic devices are encouraged. One example is an announcement made by one member of the bishopric encouraging members, who “all have your phones out right now anyway” to use their cellphones to sign up for tithing settlement,²⁵ stating that he had done so while sitting on the stand before making the announcement. Another example comes from a Sunday School instructor who paused class in order send a text message. And yet another example is a speaker who stated that participating in a Book of Mormon reading group on Instagram “was the first time in my life where I really understood the scriptures clearly. I saw counsel from the prophets in the *Book of Mormon* relevant to today.” As these examples suggest, members frequently engage with technology, even during worship services. And despite attempts by leaders to appropriate the practice for increasing the

sacredness of meetings, ward members continue to bring the secular into the sacred space of the ward buildings through their use of technology.

But not all practices are irruptions of the secular into the sacred. Rather, some practices, such as the multipurpose use of the chapel, simply work to homogenize rather than secularize space. Despite officially designating the chapel as a distinct space for worship, the Wasatch Front ward uses the chapel for both a worship and a learning space. Besides its use for sacrament meeting, the chapel also functions as a classroom for the Elder's Quorum, who meet in the rostrum of the chapel and use the choir seats. Despite the floorplans designating the room east of the cultural hall and stage as the "Priesthood" room, it is used as a nursery for the young children in the ward. Because of this, the chapel is needed in order to provide room for the Elders to meet and learn together in their quorum.

As I mentioned previously, this alternate use of the chapel does not bring the secular into the sacred space of the chapel, but it does work to homogenize the space within the ward building. As the space is homogenized, so too are the practices and behaviors homogenized. Thus, what is appropriate in the hallways,²⁶ foyers, and classrooms—and even what is appropriate in the culture hall—is appropriate for the chapel. By flattening the difference between rooms, the ward building itself becomes flattened: it becomes an extension of everyday life rather than a refuge from the everyday. Through the homogenization of Mormon space, members lose the opportunity for a distinct(ly) Mormon place. Rather, they are left with a meetinghouse that, as Martha Bradley has so eloquently written,

Reflects an embrace of the earth rather than a
preoccupation with the heavens. It has become human-

centered. It is spatially the scene for the interaction of the community of Saints rather than the interaction between human beings and God. ("Steeple" 48)

And in this embrace of the earth, what is lost? While the answer to this question cannot be confidently given, by looking at the words of past president of the Church, David O. McKay, some insight might be gleaned:

When you enter a Church building, you are coming into the presence of our Father in heaven; and that should be sufficient incentive for you to prepare your hearts, your minds, and even your attire, that you might appropriately and properly sit in his presence. (McKay 509)

For McKay, as for other Church leaders and even local members, the ward building is supposed to be sacred. It is supposed to be preoccupied with heaven. But members do not treat these buildings as such. Rather, they allow the buildings to be in the world *and* of the world. But, when the buildings are designed with such non-place character, what other option is there?

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have used the language of sacred space to discuss ward buildings. In the previous section I argued that the sacred is de-sacralized, or at least made permeable, through transgressive practices. However, I have also argued that such practices, while transgressing the *place*-ing strategies of the Church that dictate sense of place through spatial mythologies, reinforce other *place*-ing strategies that ascribe non-place character to the ward buildings. I suggest, then, that the space of the Wasatch building is at once sacred and non-sacred. Furthermore, it is neither sacred nor non-sacred. Rather, it is a space that is undifferentiated. It is a homogenous space that, in many ways, is entirely dictated by the practices that occur within it. And yet, the practices

that occur within the building simply reify the sense(s) of (non)place that the *place*-ing practices of the Church have ascribed to it.

Furthermore, the practices of congregants, both individually and communally, reaffirms the tension that is built into the very walls and floors of the ward building. Returning to Cresswell's suggestion that "[p]eople read places by acting in them" (*In Place* 16), it is in the actions of ward members that they often read the intentions of the building's author: both the meanings of non-place and of sacred spatial mythologies. That is not to say, however, that members *only* read the intended meanings. By transgressing official policies, by creating spaces that are permeable to both the sacred and the secular, members create nuanced buildings with multiple meanings, even creating multiple places within one room. Part of the reason for this multiplicity of meanings comes from the tension that the Church's building policies and *place*-ing practices responds to: the dictum to be in the world but not of the world. In responding to this dictum, the Church grapples with fitting in while standing out, and the tension is reflected both in the material space of the building and in the practices that occur in place.

Notes

¹ Between October, 2015 and March, 2016, I performed 29 hours of fieldwork in which I observed church services and ward activities. During these observations, I recorded jottings, which were then transcribed into 79 pages of fieldnotes. I also conducted email interviews with (11) members between February and March, 2016.

² In the Mormon lexicon, "saints" refers to members of the church. This is evident in the full name of the church: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

³ Before settling in the great basin, the LDS Church was driven from place to place by severe persecution. The persecution reached a climax when Lilburn Boggs, the governor of Missouri, issued an extermination order in 1838 that forced the Saints to leave Independence, Missouri and trek west.

⁴ While the Great Basin was devoid of white settlers and settlements before the Mormon pioneers arrived, it was by no means devoid of human life.

⁵ Temples are the most sacred sites in Mormon theology. Within temples, faithful and worthy members engage in rites and ceremonies—ordinances—in which they make covenants with God. Members participate in ordinances for themselves as well as for deceased ancestors in these sacred temples.

⁶ Centering life around God is also manifest spatially in the Book of Mormon and in the Old Testament book of Genesis. Genesis recounts that Lot “pitched his tent toward Sodom” (Gen 13.12), which LDS leaders have suggested means being preoccupied with worldly things (“Being in the World but Not of the World”, Cook) rather than the things of God. In contrast, the Book of Mormon suggests that faithful believers “pitched their tents round about the temple, every man having his tent with the door thereof towards the temple” (Book of Mormon Mos. 2.6). These mythologies carry strong symbolic weight in the contemporary moment and informed historical Zion building practices.

⁷ During the early period of the LDS Church, polygamy was practiced by many members. The U.S. government did not agree with the practice of polygamy and applied pressure on Church leaders to abandon the practice. Despite pressure from the U.S. government, and despite laws that were passed that made the practice of polygamy illegal, Mormon settlers continued the practice until 1890, when Wilford Woodruff issued a manifesto that officially ended the practice within the LDS Church (Doctrine and Covenants “Official Declaration 1”).

⁸ For more on the need for Mormons to “fit in” to American mainstream, see Jan Shipps’ “Difference and Otherness: Mormonism and the American Religious Mainstream” in *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons*, pp. 302-328.

⁹ A branch functions in the same way that wards do as geographically delimited congregations. Branches, however, consist of fewer members. In locations where there are not enough members to constitute a full ward, branches are established.

¹⁰ Though there are bike racks on the building’s east side, during my time observing, I never saw these bike racks in use.

¹¹ According to as-built drawings, the roof is 30 feet tall at its highest point.

¹² For more on Bradley’s discussion of Mormon steeples, see “The Mormon Steeple: A Symbol of What?” published in *Sunstone*, September 1992.

¹³ See Figure 4: Justin Wheatley’s *Chaos & Calm*, for example. Another example is *A Beacon in the Waves*, also by Justin Wheatley.

¹⁴ The *Architecture, Engineering, and Construction Design Guidelines* (2013) is a 182-page PDF file. Aside from a cover and a table of contents, the remainder of the book outlines specific guidelines to be followed without deviance.

¹⁵ In order to maintain the confidentiality of participants, I have affixed a pseudonym to both the ward building and the ward itself.

¹⁶ See note 33.

¹⁷ For more on strategies and tactics, see Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

¹⁸ I acknowledge that my discussion here has certainly not been exhaustive. I have, however, hoped to provide depth to a few practices that I observed as important in the creation of place. Other practices that exist, according to members, are: the offering of prayers, the singing of hymns, partaking of the sacrament, dressing appropriately, and covering the sacrament trays with a white cloth (though this practice is only done by the individuals who prepare, bless, and pass the sacrament).

¹⁹ The priesthood is held by men in the Church. Within the priesthood, there are several designations. First, the priesthood is divided into Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods, with varying degrees of authority housed within each. These priesthoods are further divided into offices. The Aaronic priesthood is divided into offices of Deacons, Teachers, and Priests. At the ward level, the Melchizedek priesthood is divided into Elders and High Priests. Groups of priesthood holders in the same office are called quorums (see also D&C 20; 84).

²⁰ The Church has long engaged in policy decisions that encourage members to attend the ward to which they are assigned geographically. The most recent iteration of this “encouragement”, which is set to be announced in March 2016, is punitive in nature and requires members to attend their geographically assigned ward or else they will not be able to hold callings or renew their temple recommends.

²¹ According to Dallin H. Oaks, “A priesthood blessing is a conferral of power over spiritual things. In a priesthood blessing a servant of the Lord exercises the priesthood, as moved upon by the Holy Ghost, to call upon the powers of heaven for the benefit of the person being blessed. Such blessings are conferred by holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which has the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the Church” (“The Importance of Priesthood Blessings” n.p.).

²² During sacrament meeting, the entire ward is present. Sunday school is divided by age group: youth attend in their particular age group, adults attend together. Auxiliary meetings are broken up even more completely, with men and women attending different meetings: Men attend with their priesthood quorum, women attend Relief Society.

²³ The first Sunday of each month is designated as “Fast Sunday” and members are encouraged to fast for two consecutive meals. On “Fast Sundays” sacrament meetings are open meetings in which anyone can stand at the pulpit and share their testimonies of gospel truths. Because testimonies are shared on “Fast Sunday,” the meeting is often referred to as “Fast and Testimony Meeting.”

²⁴ The *Gospel Library* app developed by the Church is available for free and compatible with all major operating systems.

²⁵ The command to pay tithing has existed since the early days of the Church. While what is acceptable as a “full tithe” (10% of an individual’s increase) has changed over time, so has the amount of accountability. In the contemporary Church, each member is required to declare to the bishop whether or not s/he pays a “full tithe”. This is done at a year-end meeting called a tithing settlement. This meeting is also used to ensure that the Church has a proper record of the tithes and offerings made by each member.

²⁶ I often observed the back of the chapel being used as a hallway between the north and south foyers while Elder’s Quorum meetings were in session.

CHAPTER 5

LIGHT, SHADOWS, AND TRANSGRESSION:

AN IN(CON)CLUSION

Light and Shadow

“Without boundaries to set them apart,” writes Jan Shipps, “without ‘Gentiles’ to stand over and against, a chosen people cannot exist” (116). Through *place*-ing strategies, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints creates and enforces boundaries surrounding moral geographies wherein practicing members can find refuge. This boundary creation is accomplished through transforming meetinghouses into logos that represent, like the Nephite cities in the Book of Mormon, places of safety in an always-already dangerous world. In other words, standardization of meetinghouse architecture allows members to quickly recognize Zion in the midst of Babylon; standardization brings visibility.

Visibility, then, is a key factor in the creation of boundaries and, therefore, identity. Visibility also suggests a paradox: uniqueness in appearance provides the opportunity for visibility while at the same time visibility is also attained through conformity. LDS meetinghouses provide visibility through both uniqueness and conformity, offering distinct identities and clear boundaries to local members who use those buildings. While both conformity and individuality produce visibility, together they create a unique form of visibility. This unique visibility is evident in the standardized

structure of meetinghouses. As I have shown, ward meetinghouses are uniquely Mormon. They are distinct and distinguishable from other buildings. And yet they are standard and uniform. This melding of the unique and the uniform creates, as Paul Starrs argues, “an assertive trademark of Mormon congregations across the world” (337). The meetinghouse itself becomes the symbol of Mormon life and lifestyles. These buildings, like the congregations that worship within their walls, are meant to be “the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill” (Matt. 5.14) that cannot be hidden. They are meant to be visible. As the previous chapter explored, this visibility is in tension with the idea of conformity. Members are tasked with being in the world—fitting in—but not of the world—being peculiar. Thus, members are tasked with shining their light, but not shining too brightly. In other words, they are tasked with balancing light and shadow.

Shadows result from a lack of light, and there are a few different means of arriving at such a lack. The first is the shadow that occurs due to the spatial limitations of a light source. Imagining a candle upon a candlestick, it is easy to visualize areas beyond the reach of the candle’s light. The area beyond the light emitted by the flame is shadow. This physical separation of what is lighted and what remains in darkness creates an alterity of the unknown. As I have argued, Mormon belief suggests that members of the Church are “not of this world” (John 17.16) but, while they are in it, are meant to be examples to the world. As Shipps suggests, in order for a light, or a chosen people, to exist, there must first be something that is not light, not chosen. There must be some “other”.

This othering is evident in the spatial mythologies that separate Nephites and Lamanites along spiritual (and racial) lines *as well as* spatial lines. Because the *Book of*

Mormon is written from a Nephite sensibility, it privileges Nephite thought. Furthermore, it makes assumptions regarding Lamanite thought. In other words, the Lamanites remain unknown to the Nephites; they remain in the shadows. And because the Lamanites are unknown, they are not familiar, they are strangers, they are Other. And while this othering is present in mythology, it emerges in the contemporary Sunday School classes as well. Discussions of member persecution by the abstract “world” creates an Other. Like the Lamanites, “the world” is unknown, but it is also unknowable. Because “the world” is abstract, it has no physical referent. Rather, it is an imagined other that takes form in the minds of Mormon practitioners through Church *place-ing* strategies.

Through *place-ing* spatial-mythological meanings within the ward buildings, the Church creates an other that exists somewhere that the saints of God are not. And since members are encouraged to meet regularly at their designated ward buildings, the building becomes, as members suggest, “a physical refuge” “away from the typical activities of a carnal world” where “like-minded people” reinforce relationships. Because ward buildings house members, who are the light of the world, the ward building becomes a place of light while what is not the ward building is in shadow.

Understanding the ward building as a place of light is a means of reinforcing the mythological sense of place fostered therein. The logic is as follows: because the righteous are the light of the world, wherever they meet becomes a place of light; thus, ward buildings become places of light. If ward buildings are places of light, and if the righteous—the lights of the world—meet in them, those who do not congregate in ward meetinghouses are not the lights of the world and, therefore, they are not righteous. In this way, Mormon mythology reaffirms itself through the ward meetinghouse.

The same logic holds true when viewing the ward meetinghouse as a fortified Nephite city. This is due, in part, to the conflation of light and safety. Because what is in the light can be seen and known, it can be prepared against and is, therefore, safe. The shadow, however, is unknown, cannot be prepared against, and is unsafe. For Mormon practitioners, then, it is important to come to the meetinghouse to both prove righteousness (the righteous meet in ward buildings) and to disprove wickedness (by attending the ward building, an individual is not in darkness). Thus, attending regular Sunday services is crucial for proving righteousness and belonging.

While attendance at the ward meetinghouse on Sunday is critical, it is not the only means of proving belonging and differentiating from “the world”. Practices, which are encouraged and are a part of the *place*-ing strategy of the Church, that govern appearance also contribute to the distinction between Mormon and non-Mormon, Zion and Babylon. Because the pairing is dichotomous, being both in Zion and in Babylon is incongruous, and there is no space in between the poles: the edge between righteousness and wickedness is steep, and it is easy to fall. Thus, it is safest for members to stay central, which means to conform to the dominant culture. In order to maintain this centrality, leaders teach members to “stay by the tree” (Pearson n.p.) and not desert to the great and spacious building, which will surely fall (Book of Mormon 1 Nephi 11.36). Thus, if practicing members remain true, they will get their reward, which “is the most desirable above all things” (Book of Mormon 1 Nephi 11.22), “[w]hile they who reject this glad message / Shall never such happiness know” (*Hymns* 19).

Within these phrases of reward, there are necessarily winners and losers. Again, as Shipps stated, in order for a chosen people to exist, there must be an Other to stand

over and against. Thus, it is not only that the righteous will gain a reward, but they will gain it even as they stand over the unrighteous, whose world of Babylon is coming to an end. This combative understanding seems out of place in a Zion wherein “there was no contention among all the people, in all the land” (Book of Mormon 4 Nephi 1.13). And yet, by encouraging an us/them worldview within the ward building, the Church has created a Zion inside which is an imagined unity that flattens difference among those on the inside and simultaneously sharpens the difference between the inside and outside while flattening difference among those on the outside.

Despite the actual pluralities and heterogeneities that exist within the ward building, the “specific imagined world of vernacular readers” (B. Anderson 63) is homogenized through *place*-ing strategies that encourage standardization. In the imagined world of the Mormon community there is “One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4.5), one body, one building. Actual plurality is reduced to an imagined singularity in which “there is no identity, because there are no dualities” (Berger, *Rendezvous* 167). Because there is one standard building, there is one congregational body, which is, itself, increasingly standardized.

Through this imagined homogeneity of belief within the meetinghouse, “cultural generalization had begun to acquire the armor of scientific [or doctrinal] statement and the ambience of corrective study” (Said 149). By acquiring the weight of doctrinal significance, cultural mores, such as standards of dress and appearance, obtain hegemonic standing within the Church. This occurs because the constructed body of the ward building with its “immediately recognizable...calculated presentation of self” (Starrs 348) is the standard by which other bodies are measured. In order for an individual to

belong, s/he must not only attend Sunday meetings, but must also conform to the standard, which standard, though an imagined cultural artifact, is wearing the “uniform of a regiment” (Berger, *Pocket* 66).

And while Zion is viewed as homogenous—“neither were there Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites” (Book of Mormon 4 Nephi 1.17) among them—the world of Babylon outside of Zion is equally homogenous, covered in a “dark veil of unbelief” (Book of Mormon Alma 19.6). Through *place*-ing strategies, difference is flattened; multiplicity dissolves into dichotomy. There is righteousness and there is wickedness. There is light and there is shadow.

A second kind of shadow is produced as a result of the materiality of the candle itself, not due to the light’s limitations. Even as the candlestick upholds the light, its opaque form obstructs the very light it emits. Similarly, in attempting to create functional, cost-effective units of Zion, the Church did away with custom meetinghouses and opted for “standard plans to streamline the building process” in order to “insur[e] the suitability of church forms and facilitate[e] the uniform procedure of Church programs across the world” (Bradley, “Cloning” 23). In other words, in an attempt to grow its light, the Church erased difference and cast its own stark shadow.

The tremendous growth experienced by the Church threatened the doctrinal stability of the Church. With more members in an increasingly global Church new (mis)interpretations of doctrines that could lead to schisms among the members¹ became a legitimate threat. In order to ensure that future cleavages would not occur, the Church needed a system of management that would provide clear direction to its members.

One method of providing clear direction was through a standardized, non-place,

meetinghouse. With its non-place character, the standardized meetinghouse provided its own instructions for use (Augé 77). Because of its neutral design, because of its nakedness, the ward building could be clothed in convention (Berger, *Pocket* 66), which allowed ward buildings to be defined, in part, by standardized practices of dress and appearance. As a socially constructed place, and specifically as “a *product* to be used, to be consumed” (Lefebvre 85), the ward building absorbed the sense of place that dress standards create. As “a *means of production*” (Lefebvre 85), the ward building encouraged dress and appearance standards that matched its own appearance: unobtrusive, simple, and distinctly Mormon.²

Thus, even as the Church created unobtrusive buildings devoid of religious symbols, it created a powerful symbol in the building itself: it created a clearly identifiable symbol of Mormonism; it created Zion. Such symbolism, however, requires the maintenance of boundaries in order to keep the symbol pure. In order to maintain the purity of the symbol, the Church established standards that dictate everything from aesthetics to building usage. Failing to comply to these standards marks an individual as transgressive and out of place (Cresswell, *In Place* 11), marking an individual as a stranger or an outsider, who is unaccustomed to the expectations of the place.

Transgression

Transgressing the norms of ward buildings, however, “foregrounds the mapping of ideology onto space and place, and thus the margins can tell us something about normality” (ibid. 9). But, as Tim Cresswell also points out, “transgression...does not, by definition, rest on the intentions of actors but on the *results*” (23). When a woman feels out of place in a ward building for wearing a pantsuit; when a man with pierced ears and

tattoos feels like an outsider, they glimpse what it means to be an insider, what it means to belong, and, by extension, what it means to be innocent.

In this way, *place*-ing practices, which designate both sense of place and appropriate practices that reinforce that sense of place, define what it means to be on the Lord's side and, therefore, encourage actual homogenization to accompany the imagined homogenization referred to earlier. And yet, these standards, which are replicated in practice, are, at least to some extent, arbitrary. The Church's stance on beards and long hair, for example, emerged in response to the hippy and anti-establishment movements of the 1960s (Oaks, "Standards of Dress" n.p.). According to Dallin H. Oaks, "[t]here is nothing inherently wrong about long hair or beards" (n.p.). Nevertheless, cultural mores, such as those regarding beards for men and pantsuits for women,³ gain near-doctrinal status through both official endorsement and member practice. Regarding beards, Oaks continues, "but a person with a beard...is susceptible of being misunderstood" (n.p.). Thus, in order to simplify meaning and avoid misunderstanding, certain appearances, certain standards, are encouraged over others, and gray areas are made either black or white. Through this process, transgressing cultural mores and standards of appropriateness becomes a potentially alienating practice.

While transgression highlights certain practices as ideologically normative, it also allows members to disrupt those practices and create a more open and topographical space of inclusion. Intervention is possible because, as Doreen Massey argues, "[s]pace can never be definitively purified" (95). Despite *place*-ing strategies that move individuals closer and closer to a center, there is never a "pure" central point. Rather, there is always multiplicity.

Multiplicity

While I have argued throughout this thesis that the Mormon church has encouraged distinct interpretations of their buildings and instituted practices that reify an official or appropriate sense of place within those buildings, thus creating singular LDS identity, I also wish to suggest that members can reimagine their ward buildings as places of multiplicity. In the previous chapter I showed how members are able to engage in placemaking practices through transgression, especially transgressing the official sense of place ascribed to the chapel.

Such transgressions, I argue, are only the beginning. Because ward buildings exhibit non-place character, and because non-places are not absolute (Augé viii), they are open to interpretation and members can ascribe meanings that both subvert and reinforce official senses of place. In doing so, it is possible to transgress the vision of a place without any “-ites” (Book of Mormon 4 Ne. 1.17), a place without any difference, and embrace what Doreen Massey calls “one of the truly productive characteristics of material spatiality” which is

its potential for the happenstance juxtaposition of previously unrelated trajectories, that business of walking around a corner and bumping into alterity, of having (somehow, and well or badly) to get on with neighbors that have got ‘here’...by different routes from you. (94)

In such an interpretation of place, strangers, while still extant and while both unrecognized and unknown, can become both recognized and known for who they are, and not how they appear to be. By allowing for multiplicity, members can metaphorically bring the autoroute back into the city, refamiliarizing themselves with the beauty of alterity, which is the beauty of humanity, rather than marking otherness as always-already

out of place and threatening.

I am not arguing against the spatial mythologies that imbue Mormon life with symbolic meanings. On the contrary, by embracing multiplicity, members are able to more fully embrace those spatial mythologies because mythologies are necessarily open to multiple interpretations. Rather than rejecting the spatial mythologies, multiplicity rejects the non-place character of the ward building, reclaiming the sacred as truly set-apart from the secular.

While contemporary building practices result in the proliferation of Mormon non-places, the practices that these non-places produce, serve to designate ward buildings as distinct(ly) Mormon places, which have their basis in closely held mythologies. These mythologies, in turn, inform the building practices of the Church. Furthermore, these mythologies empower individuals and congregations within the Mormon church to (re)create their relationships with and understandings of the world, and in so doing have allowed them to reimagine the(ir) world. But this reimagining is made in the image of the Church and is clothed in convention, “wear[ing] the uniform of a regiment” (Berger, *Pocket* 66). Through transgression, through multiplicity, members can reimagine the(ir) world after their own image, which was created after the image of God.

Inconclusion

Some would argue that my reading in this chapter is overly optimistic and seemingly disconnected from the entrenched mythologies and the *place*-ing practices that exist within Mormon faith and which I have explored in this thesis. I acknowledge that an evolution toward places of multiplicity is optimistic, but such optimism comes from the possibilities that rest before communities both within Mormonism and in the academy. In

this thesis, I have enacted a spatial intervention into Mormon studies. Furthermore, instead of seeking to understand Mormonism just in terms of history, I have focused on the contemporary moment, exploring how spatial mythologies are currently enacted through individual and congregational practice. Such interventions, however, are merely an entrance into the Edenic soils that a spatial analysis of Mormonism holds.

Understandings how place (both material and mythological) influences identity and practice empowers individual practitioners to enact change and allows scholars to identify potential pathways toward change.

Such interventions are not only significant to the field of Mormon studies, but present opportunities for geographers to explore religious mythologies as spaces of identity creation. Furthermore, my introduction of *place*-ing as a metric for understanding sense of place allows geographers and other scholars interested in critical place/space studies new vocabularies for describing strategies of control in place. *Place*-ing, as a concept, allows for more nuanced understandings of how meanings are created and maintained in place. As a term, *place*-ing increases precision of the discussion surrounding the generation of sense of place. Such nuance and precision empower scholars to more carefully explore the politics of and in place.

Most importantly, perhaps, is the power that this thesis offers to practicing Mormons. By interrogating cultural mythologies, members can, as I argued above, move toward greater inclusion of all people, which furthers one mission of the Church, which former President of the church, Ezra Taft Benson, described:

We are commanded by God to take this gospel to all the world. That is the cause that must unite us today. Only the gospel will save the world from the calamity of its own self-destruction. Only the gospel will unite men of all races

and nationalities in peace. Only the gospel will bring joy, happiness, and salvation to the human family. (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 167)

In understanding how spatial mythologies manifest in contemporary practice, contemporary Mormons can transform ward buildings into unifying, rather than dividing, forces between and across demographics, not just among believers. While this thesis makes inroads into the movement toward inclusion and multiplicity, much work remains to be done by scholars both inside and outside the Mormon faith in order to further explore how this shift can occur.

Again, this work is merely a beginning. If it does anything, it brings the *place*-ing strategies of the Church to light. It gives them a name. These *place*-ing strategies work as well as they do because Mormon members believe in authority: church leaders act on behalf of God (Amos 3.7). And yet, Mormons also believe that God speaks directly to individuals (Book of Mormon, Moroni 10.4-5), which suggests that each individual can and should create personal, not merely official, meaning within Mormon theology. To conclude, I suggest that the same holds true of officially sanctioned meanings for ward buildings. Rather than merely accepting the *place*-d meanings that have been presented, individual Mormons can “study it out in your mind” (Doctrine and Covenants 9.8) and create a place that “confront[s] the challenge of the negotiation of multiplicity” (Massey 141), and in doing so, create ward buildings that invoke the sacred and invite the divine.

Notes

¹ There have been times in Mormon history when factions left mainstream Mormonism to form other groups. One of these factions, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (RLDS), formed after the death of Joseph Smith and is now called the Church of Christ. They felt that Smith’s son, not Brigham Young, should be the next prophet. Another group, the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

(FLDS), left when the practice of polygamy was officially abandoned by the LDS Church.

² While none of the dress and grooming standards are necessarily particular to Mormonism, the combination of standards creates a Mormon aesthetic. It can be argued, however, that such an aesthetic, particularly in regards to male dress and appearance, is highly corporate: white shirts and ties, dark colored suits, clean shaven faces, and close-cut hair. While it is not my project to explore the overlap between corporate America and Mormonism, it is worth noting the connection between the “Mormon aesthetic”, which Spencer W. Kimball called, “a style of our own” (Kimball n.p.), and the corporate aesthetic.

³ Just as many dress and grooming standards are not necessarily particular to Mormonism, discouraging the wearing of pantsuits among women is also not strictly a Mormon more. Rather, it is imbricated in larger structures of patriarchy, which infiltrate Mormon beliefs and culture.

WORKS CITED

- Abbey, Edward. "Polemic: Industrial Tourism and the National Parks." *Desert Solitaire*. Tuscon: U of Arizona, 1968. 45-67.
- Adebayo, Anthony K., et al. "Architecture: The Quest for Cultural Identity." *Facta Universitatis* 11.2 (2013): 169-77.
- Aiello, Giorgia, and Greg Dickinson. "Beyond Authenticity: A Visual-material Analysis of Locality in the Global Redesign of Starbucks Stores." *Visual Communication* 13.3 (2014): 303-21.
- Alder, Douglas D. "The Mormon Ward: Congregation or Community?" *Journal of Mormon History* 5 (1978): 61-78.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. New York: Verso, 1991.
- Anderson, Paul L. Mormon Architecture and Visual Arts. *The Oxford Handbook of Mormonism*. eds. Terryl L. Givens and Philip L. Barlow. New York: Oxford, 2015. 470-84.
- Aravot, Iris. "Back to Phenomenological Placemaking." *Journal of Urban Design* 7.2 (2002): 201-12.
- Augé, Marc. *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity*. New York: Verso, 1995.
- Bailey, Carol A. *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge, 2007.
- Berger, John. *Keeping a Rendezvous*. New York: Vintage International, 1991.
- - -. *The Shape of a Pocket*. New York: Vintage International, 2001.
- Berry, Wendell E. "It All Turns on Affection." 2012 Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities. John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C. 23 Apr. 2012. *National Endowment for the Humanities*. N.p., n.d. 18 Dec. 2014. <<http://www.neh.gov/about/awards/jefferson-lecture/wendell-e-berry-lecture>>.
- Bradley, Martha Sonntag. "The Cloning of Mormon Architecture." *Dialogue* 14.2 (1981): 20-31.

--. "The Mormon Steeple: A Symbol of What?" *Sunstone* 16.3 (1992): 39-48.

Brooks, Joanna. "'Dark' Skin No Longer a Curse in Online Book of Mormon." *Religion Dispatches*. USC, n.d. 1 Dec. 2015. <<http://religiondispatches.org/dark-skin-no-longer-a-curse-in-online-book-of-mormon/>>

Bush, Lester E., Jr. "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview." *Dialogue* 8 (1973): 11-68.

Bushman, Richard Lyman. *Mormonism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford, 2008.

--. *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.

"Caring for Our Meetinghouses." *Ensign* Oct. 1995: n. pag. *LDS.org*. 24 Mar. 2015. <<https://www.lds.org/ensign/1995/10/news-of-the-church/caring-for-our-meetinghouses?lang=eng>>

Carter, Thomas. *Building Zion: The Material World of Mormon Settlement*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2015.

Casey, Edward S. "How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena." *Senses of Place*. Ed. S. Feld and K. Basso. Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1996. 13-52.

Caussé, Gérald. "Ye Are No More Strangers." Oct. 2013. *General Conference*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 2 Nov. 2015. <<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2013/10/ye-are-no-more-strangers?lang=eng>>

Christofferson, D. Todd. "A Sense of the Sacred." Church Educational System Broadcast. 7 Nov. 2004. *LDS.org*. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 16 Mar. 2015. <<https://www.lds.org/new-era/2006/06/a-sense-of-the-sacred?lang=eng>>

"Church Consolidates Meeting Schedules." *Ensign* Mar. 1980: n. pag. *LDS.org*. 5 Oct. 2015. <<https://www.lds.org/ensign/1980/03/news-of-the-church/church-consolidates-meeting-schedules?lang=eng>>

"Church Educational System Honor Code." *University Policies*. Brigham Young University, 9 Nov. 2015. 8 Apr. 2016. <<https://policy.byu.edu/view/index.php?p=26>>

Cook, Quenton L. "Being in the World but Not of the World." *Youth*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 30 Mar. 2016.

<<https://www.lds.org/youth/article/being-in-the-world-but-not-of-the-world?lang=eng>>

Cresswell, Tim. *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1996.

--. *Place: A Short Introduction*. Malden: Blackwell, 2004.

Davies, Douglas J. *The Mormon Culture of Salvation*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2000.

De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: U of California, 2011.

"Dress and Appearance." *LDS.org*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 24 Mar. 2015. <<https://www.lds.org/youth/for-the-strength-of-youth/dress-and-appearance?lang=eng>>

Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Trans. Willard R. Trask. New York: Harper & Row, 1959.

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. 2nd ed. Chicago: U of Chicago, 2011.

Endres, Danielle, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Brian Cozen. "Not Just a Place to Park Your Car: PARK(ing) as Spatial Argument." *Argument and Advocacy* 50 (2014): 121-40.

Faust, James E. "Brigham Young: A Bold Prophet." Brigham Young University Education Week. Provo, Utah. 21 Aug. 2001.

Fetterman, David M. *Ethnography: Step-by-Step*. 3rd ed. Los Angeles: Sage, 2010. Applied Social Research Methods Series 17.

Finlayson-Fife, Jennifer. "Moderating the Mormon Discourse on Modesty." *Exponent II* 33.3 (2014): 10-13. *Exponentii.org*. 29 Mar. 2016. <http://www.exponentii.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Exponent-II-Magazine_Winter-2014-Edition-4-website.pdf>

"For the Strength of Youth." *For the Strength of Youth*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 4 Nov. 2015. <<https://www.lds.org/youth/for-the-strength-of-youth?lang=eng>>

Francaviglia, Richard. *The Mapmakers of New Zion: A Cartographic History of Mormonism*. Salt Lake City: U of Utah, 2015.

WORKS CITED

- Abbey, Edward. "Polemic: Industrial Tourism and the National Parks." *Desert Solitaire*. Tuscon: U of Arizona, 1968. 45-67.
- Adebayo, Anthony K., et al. "Architecture: The Quest for Cultural Identity." *Facta Universitatis* 11.2 (2013): 169-77.
- Aiello, Giorgia, and Greg Dickinson. "Beyond Authenticity: A Visual-material Analysis of Locality in the Global Redesign of Starbucks Stores." *Visual Communication* 13.3 (2014): 303-21.
- Alder, Douglas D. "The Mormon Ward: Congregation or Community?" *Journal of Mormon History* 5 (1978): 61-78.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. New York: Verso, 1991.
- Anderson, Paul L. Mormon Architecture and Visual Arts. *The Oxford Handbook of Mormonism*. eds. Terryl L. Givens and Philip L. Barlow. New York: Oxford, 2015. 470-84.
- Aravot, Iris. "Back to Phenomenological Placemaking." *Journal of Urban Design* 7.2 (2002): 201-12.
- Augé, Marc. *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity*. New York: Verso, 1995.
- Bailey, Carol A. *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge, 2007.
- Berger, John. *Keeping a Rendezvous*. New York: Vintage International, 1991.
- - -. *The Shape of a Pocket*. New York: Vintage International, 2001.
- Berry, Wendell E. "It All Turns on Affection." 2012 Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities. John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C. 23 Apr. 2012. *National Endowment for the Humanities*. N.p., n.d. 18 Dec. 2014. <<http://www.neh.gov/about/awards/jefferson-lecture/wendell-e-berry-lecture>>.
- Bradley, Martha Sonntag. "The Cloning of Mormon Architecture." *Dialogue* 14.2 (1981): 20-31.

- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Malden: Blackwell, 1991.
- Leone, Mark. "Why the Coalville Tabernacle had to be Razed." *Dialogue* 8.2 (1973): 30-39.
- Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac: With Other Essays on Conservation from Round River*. New York: Ballantine, 1970.
- Lindlof, Thomas R., and Bryan C. Taylor. *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2011.
- Lloyd, R. Scott. "Worship through Music Hymn Singing Can Express Praise and Supplication." *Church News* [Salt Lake City] 11 Nov. 1989: n. pag. *LDS Church News*. 2 Nov. 2015.
<<http://www.ldschurchnewsarchive.com/articles/19539/Worship-through-music-hymn-singing-can-express-praise-and-supplication.html>>
- Lofland, John, and Lyn H. Lofland. *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1995.
- Loveland, Anne C., and Otis B. Wheeler. *From Meetinghouse to Megachurch: A Material and Cultural History*. Columbia: U of Missouri, 2003.
- Madison, D. Soyini. *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2005.
- Massey, Doreen. *For Space*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2005.
- Maynes, Richard J. "The Joy of Living a Christ-Centered Life." 3 Oct. 2015. *General Conference*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 30 Mar. 2016.
<<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2015/10/the-joy-of-living-a-christ-centered-life?lang=eng>>
- Mazumdar, Shampa, and Sanjoy Mazumdar. "Religious Placemaking and Community Building in Diaspora." *Environment and Behavior* 41.3 (2009): 307-37.
- Meho, Lokman I. "E-Mail Interviewing in Qualitative Research: A Methodological Discussion." *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 57.10 (2006): 1284-95.
- Meinig, D. W. "The Mormon Nation and the American Empire." *Journal of Mormon History* 22.1 (1996): 33-51.

- "Mormonism 101: What Is Mormonism." *Mormon Newsroom*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 18 Mar. 2014. 24 Mar. 2015. <<http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/mormonism-101>>
- Moulton, Kristen. "LDS Church Shows off Its New 'Green' Meetinghouse." *Salt Lake Tribune* [Salt Lake City] 27 Apr. 2010: n. pag. *The Salt Lake Tribune*. 30 Mar. 2016. <http://archive.sltrib.com/story.php?ref=/news/ci_14968222>
- Neate, Rupert. "Women Kicked off Napa Valley Wine Train File \$11m Racial Discrimination Suit." *The Guardian* 1 Oct. 2015, sec. US: n. pag. *The Guardian*. 8 Oct. 2015. <<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/oct/01/napa-valley-wine-train-racial-discrimination-lawsuit-laughing-while-black>>
- Nexus. *Building Elevation*. 1 June 2010.
- Norwood, Patricia S. "Growth: Physical Facilities' 'Wonderful Challenge.'" *Ensign* Mar. 2005: n. pag. *LDS.org*. 24 Mar. 2015. <<https://www.lds.org/ensign/2005/03/news-of-the-church/growth-physical-facilitieswonderful-challenge?lang=eng>>
- Oaks, Dallin H. "Be Not Deceived." Oct. 2004. *General Conference*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 2 Nov. 2015. <<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2004/10/be-not-deceived?lang=eng>>
- - -. "Followers of Christ." Apr. 2013. *General Conference*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 4 Nov. 2015. <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2013/04/followers-of-christ?lang=eng&_r=1>
- - -. "The Importance of Priesthood Blessings." *Youth*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 30 Mar. 2016. <<https://www.lds.org/youth/article/importance-of-priesthood-blessings?lang=eng>>
- - -. "Standards of Dress and Grooming." *New Era* Dec. 1971: n. pag. *LDS.org*. Web. 24 Mar. 2015. <<https://www.lds.org/new-era/1971/12/standards-of-dress-and-grooming?lang=eng>>
- Packer, Boyd K. "'Ye Are the Temple of God'." Oct. 2000. *General Conference*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 4 Nov. 2015. <<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2000/10/ye-are-the-temple-of-god?lang=eng>>
- Pearson, Kevin W. "Stay by the Tree." 4 Apr. 2015. *General Conference*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 8 May 2015. <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2015/04/stay-by-the-tree?lang=eng&_r=1>

- "Peculiar." *Bible Dictionary*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979. 748. *Bible Dictionary*. 30 Mar. 2016. <<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bd/peculiar?lang=eng>>
- "Peculiar People." *Topical Guide*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979. 362. *Topical Guide*. 30 Mar. 2016. <<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/tg/peculiar-people>>
- Perry, L. Tom. "How to Endure to the End." *LDS.org*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 2 Nov. 2015. <<https://www.lds.org/new-era/2012/06/how-to-endure-to-the-end?lang=eng>>
- Pierce, Joseph, Deborah G. Martin, and James T. Murphy. "Relational Place-making: The Networked Politics of Place." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36 (2010): 54-70.
- Prince, Gregory A., and Wm. Robert Wright. *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*. Salt Lake City: U of Utah, 2005.
- "Race and the Priesthood." *LDS.org*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 24 Mar. 2016. <<https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng>>
- Rapoport, Amos. *The Meaning of the Built Environment*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982.
- Relph, Edward. "Sense of Place." *Ten Geographic Ideas that Changed the World*. Ed. Susan Hanson. New Brunswick: Rutgers University, 1997. 205-25.
- Renn, Aaron M. "Erasing Distinctions: Eight Protestant Trends." *Sacred Architecture* 25 (2014): 19-21.
- - -. "Suburbs and Sacred Space." *New Geography*. N.p., 7 June 2013. 20 May 2016. <<http://www.newgeography.com/content/003762-suburbs-and-sacred-space>>
- Robbins, Lynn G. "Which Way Do You Face?" 4 Oct. 2014. *General Conference*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 7 Oct. 2015. <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/10/which-way-do-you-face?lang=eng&_r=1>
- Rose, Gillian. "Place and Identity: A Sense of Place." *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalization*. Ed. Doreen Massey and P. Jess. Oxford: Open University, 1995. 88-132.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. 25th Anniversary ed. New York: Vintage, 1979.

- Schneekloth, Lynda H., and Robert G. Shibley. *Placemaking: The Art and Practice of Building Communities*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1995.
- Seamon, David. "Body-Subject, Time-Space Routines, and Place-Ballets." *The Human Experience of Space and Place*. Ed. Anne Buttimer and David Seamon. London: Croom Helm, 1980. 148-65.
- Seymour, Nicole. "Standardized Meetinghouses Give a Place for More Members to Meet and Worship." *Ensign* Mar. 2006: n. pag.
- Shippo, Jan. "Difference and Otherness: Mormonism and the American Religious Mainstream." *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons*. Urbana: U of Illinois, 2000. 302-28.
- - -. *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition*. Urbana: U of Illinois, 1985.
- Simmel, Georg. "The Metropolis and Mental Life." *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities*. Ed. Richard Sennett. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969. 47-60.
- - -. "The Stranger." *On Individuality and Social Forms*. By Simmel. Ed. Donald N. Levine. Chicago: U of Chicago, 1971. 143-49.
- Soja, Edward W. *Seeking Spatial Justice*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2010.
- Sovik, E. A. *Architecture for Worship*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1973.
- Stack, Peggy Fletcher. "Does Mormon Modesty Mantra Reduce Women to Sex Objects?" *Salt Lake Tribune* [Salt Lake City] 7 Mar. 2014: n. pag. *The Salt Lake Tribune*. 24 Mar. 2016. <<http://archive.sltrib.com/story.php?ref=/sltrib/lifestyle/57592727-80/women-mormon-modesty-lds.html.csp>>
- - -. "Healthy or Hurtful? Twenty Years Later, Mormon 'Purge' Still Debated." *Salt Lake Tribune* [Salt Lake City] 1 Oct. 2013: n. pag. *The Salt Lake Tribune*. 14 Sept. 2015. <<http://archive.sltrib.com/story.php?ref=/sltrib/news/56920802-78/church-mormon-lds-six.html.csp>>
- - -. "This Mormon Sunday School Teacher Was Dismissed for Using Church's Own Race Essay in Lesson." *The Salt Lake Tribune*. N.p., 5 May 2015. 8 May 2015. <<http://www.sltrib.com/lifestyle/faith/2475803-155/mormon-bishop-dismisses-teacher-for-using>>
- Starrs, Paul F. "Meetinghouses in the Mormon Mind: Ideology, Architecture, and Turbulent Streams of an Expanding Church." *Geographical Review* 99.3 (2009): 323-55.

Stegner, Wallace. "The Sense of Place." *The Sense of Place*. N.p.: n.p., 1992. *University of Puget Sound*. 18 Dec. 2014.
 <http://www.pugetsound.edu/files/resources/7040_Stegner,%20Wallace%20%20Sense%20of%20Place.pdf>.

Stone, David R. "Zion in the Midst of Babylon." Apr. 2006. *General Conference*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 4 Nov. 2015.
 <<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2006/04/zion-in-the-midst-of-babylon?lang=eng>>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. *Architecture, Engineering, and Construction Design Guidelines*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2013.

- - -. *The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ*. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981.

- - -. *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003.

- - -. *The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981.

- - -. *Ezra Taft Benson*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2014. Teachings of Presidents of the Church.

- - -. *Facilities Management Guidelines for Meetinghouses and Other Church Property*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2011.

- - -. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010.

- - -. *Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985.

- - -. *Joseph Fielding Smith*. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2013. Teachings of the Presidents of the Church.

- - -. *King James Bible*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979.

- - -. *Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985.

- - -. "Meetinghouse Artwork Guidelines for Facilities Managers and Project Managers." *AEC*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2014.

- - -. *Meetinghouse Standard Plans*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 8 May 2015. <http://aec.ldschurch.org/aec/standard_plans/>
- - -. *The Pearl of Great Price*. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981.
- - -. *United States and Canada Standard Plans Planning Brochure*. N.p.: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2015. *Standard Plans Planning Brochure*. 5 Oct. 2015. <http://aec.ldschurch.org/aec/standard_plans/Standard_Plans_Planning_Brochure.pdf?t=2015_9_1_16_41>.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1977. Print.
- Uchtdorf, Dieter F. "On Being Genuine." 4 Apr. 2015. *General Conference*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 30 Mar. 2016. <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2015/04/on-being-genuine?lang=eng&_r=1>
- Underwood, Grant. *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism*. Urbana: U of Illinois, 1993.
- "What Is Placemaking?" *Project for Public Spaces*. Project for Public Spaces, n.d. 14 Sept. 2015. <http://www.pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking/>
- Wheatley, Justin. *A Beacon in the Waves*. 2016.
- - -. *Chaos & Calm*. 2015.
- White, James F. *Protestant Worship and Church Architecture*. New York: Oxford, 1964.
- Williams, Terry Tempest. *Red: Passion and Patience in the Desert*. New York: Vintage, 2001.
- "Yesterday Was Park(ing) Day 2014 - Send Us Photos of Pop-Up Parks near You!" *Inhabit*. N.p., n.d. 8 Apr. 2016. <<http://inhabitat.com/tomorrow-is-parking-day-2014-send-us-photos-of-pop-up-parks-near-you/parking-day-2013-kids/>>
- Yorgason, Ethan. "Creating Regional Identity, Moral Orders and Spatial Contiguity: Imagined Landscapes of Mormon Americanization." *Cultural Geographies* 9 (2002): 448-66.
- Zeballos, Jorge F. "If You Will Be Responsible." 4 Apr. 2015. *General Conference*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 8 May 2015.

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2015/04/if-you-will-be-responsible?lang=eng&_r=1>

Ziff. "Modesty Rhetoric in Church Magazines." *Zelophehad's Daughters*. N.p., n.d. 29 Mar. 2016. <<http://zelophehadsdaughters.com/2014/06/03/modesty-rhetoric-in-church-magazines/>>

"Zion." *LDS.org*. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. 16 Dec. 2014. <<https://www.lds.org/topics/zion?lang=eng&query=zion>>.